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EDITORIAL NOTES

AT last the National Theatre Committee has launched its appeal—a Silver Jubilee appeal. In announcing the decision Lord Lytton urged that it afforded far the best means of commemorating the King's birthday. It is a justifiable plea, for a birthday present should consist of some desirable thing which would not have been acquired in the ordinary course of events. Provision for the unemployed or the sick may be more indispensable, but just because indispensable must be made in any event. Amongst the things not yet universally recognized as indispensable, a National Theatre is as desirable as anything I can think of. It would be an ideal Jubilee present to the King and the nation.

The Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee already has about £150,000 in hand which must be devoted to this purpose, and it has wisely decided to appeal on the grand scale for an amount which would bring the total to £500,000. It would be no use attempting the scheme in a pettifogging way. A small experimental theatre would not fulfil the purposes of a National Theatre. The latter should be the best possible building designed by the best available architect on a commanding site in the heart of the West End, and should be such that as a piece of architecture alone it would add something to the dignity of London; the performances should be on a scale which would compel the public to recognize that something significant was happening in British drama.

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AT this emergency in the history of the movement I had hoped that Mr. Granville-Barker would send me his views about it, but instead he has sent me a copy of his book on the National Theatre, alleging that it contains all that he can possibly say on the subject. (I already possessed a copy, but of course was glad to have another as a second line of defence against borrowers.) It can be procured from Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson. It is far the most authoritative work on the subject. Mr. Granville-Barker conducted the most interesting British repertory theatre of this century, and out of his own wide experience has constructed a programme which

is put forward as a practical guide to action. The repertory method as it should be applied in a National Theatre, the site, the building, the equipment required, the staff and organization, the finance—all of these are described and explained in detail. In Mr. Granville-Barker's opinion a National Theatre, being provided with buildings, equipment and their bare upkeep, should be well able to support itself and balance its budget. "The sensible thing would be to set it on the basis of a public school or university; not to expect it to pay interest on its foundation, but to cover its running expenses by its receipts." On one point he is insistent: "*A National Theatre cannot be begun in a small way.*"

PRIVATE munificence in the past and some recognition of public duty by Governments have seen to it that though we have as yet no National Theatre, at least we have National Galleries and a British Museum. In these notes last November I commented on the desirability of making more use of these institutions, and so getting a better dividend on the national capital locked up in them, by extending the hours during which they are open to the public. I am glad to learn that it has been decided to make an improvement in this direction at the National Gallery. It is proposed that from the beginning of April it should be open on three evenings every week until 8 p.m. (The small additional expenditure involved will be shown in the departmental estimates submitted to Parliament this month).

But what a pity that when the Government has been screwed up to the point of sanctioning this reform it should only go half-way. The busy person who leaves office or shop at six, probably hungry, is not in the happiest frame of mind for enjoying pictures. These timid little gestures of generosity disappoint rather than satisfy. Two evenings till ten would be worth twice as much as three evenings till eight; then, on those evenings, it would be as easy for workers to visit the Gallery as to go to a cinema. I wonder if the Chancellor of the Exchequer has ever observed the procession of persons who may be seen any fine evening in spring, summer or autumn *walking* from the East End, through the City, to the West End to look at the shops and the lights. Should not these zestful sightseers have opportunities to visit the British Museum and the Galleries?

IT is probable that the last article written by Clifford Sharp before his death was that which he contributed to the February number of *THE LONDON MERCURY* in the form of a review of "Early Victorian England." Towards the end of January he rang me up on the telephone to say that he had been ill, but had recovered and was able to complete the article. The result showed that even then, in writing, he had not lost his distinctive power of "attacking" a subject and giving it the cast of his remarkable commonsense. He was a writer on political and social subjects primarily, but he differed from most political writers in his capacity for stripping his

theme of the conventionalities and presenting the bare commonsense of the matter with frankness and force. That is a very rare quality among political writers ; when it occurs it raises work at once towards the level of literature, which in its essence must always be individual, and never mob or gang expression. As Editor of *The New Statesman* Sharp was at his best in the middle period, before his health began to give way, and after he had been released from the somewhat exacting influence of the leaders of Fabianism.

SHARP was seldom under the tyranny of catch-words. He was, of course, a ceaseless advocate of the rights and freedom of the Press, but he would not have been taken in by the amazing perversions of the principle that have been sedulously cultivated in recent years. The right to express opinions freely is so important, the recent menace of censorship in some countries so formidable, that one would not willingly utter a word that might be construed as a whittling down of the claims to free speech or free writing. But the devil can sometimes talk Scripture to his own purpose. Among the most specious advocates of freedom of speech and opinion to-day are those who use their mass-produced newspapers to foist their own opinions on the more credulous public.

The point has been admirably made in a letter which Lord Elton wrote to *The Times* the other day. I am not concerned with the rights or wrongs of the political question he alluded to, or the particular views of a popular paper which, as he pointed out, reported twelve speeches against the India Bill in the House of Commons debate and only one in its favour. The proprietor of that widely circulating paper and its attendant group of journals may have been right or wrong—that does not affect the more vital question, which Lord Elton thus expressed :

Is not the drying up . . . of its sources of political information a threat to the very existence of democracy—a threat against which the B.B.C. is an important, though as yet only a partial safeguard ? Again, is it either right or expedient that any individual, however personally capable or upright he may be, should be able by mere money-power to purchase a control over a great nation's sources of information, a control which is so far reaching and can be so arbitrarily employed ?

ARE not these questions, asks Lord Elton, as significant as any which have occupied the attention of Parliament during the last decade ? Surely they are. Yet how can any solution of the problem be found as long as those who have the greatest interest in asserting the true doctrine of freedom of opinion meekly acquiesce in the false doctrine asserted by those who are cornering publicity ? We have a case where one man controls a daily paper and a Sunday paper with vast circulations throughout Great Britain, a London evening paper and a chain of evening papers in the provinces. Has the expression "freedom of the Press" any meaning when applied to such a prodigious combine ? One man is free, certainly—the

man who controls this amazing mechanism ; he is free to dictate to it. But are the reporters free to give disinterested reports of speeches ? Lord Elton says no. Are the political writers free ? The opinions they utter are dictated. Are the Editors themselves free ? They are selected as capable administrators who will do what the Chief requires. Let journalists by all means continue to demand the freedom of the Press, but not be guilty of the craven assumption that the freedom of, say, Lord Rothermere or Lord Beaverbrook is the same thing as *their* freedom.



WE find the same confusion of thought when we turn to the question of cinematograph films and censorship. I have been blamed for suggesting that some kind of censorship may be necessary—as if I were supporting the principle of censorship of art. But when we speak of the freedom of the films, whose freedom are we thinking of ? The freedom of artists to express themselves ? Or the freedom of a few men, who control studios at Hollywood and a chain of cinemas in America, to impose what pictures they like upon a docile British public ?

Let us support as consistently and as vehemently as possible the real freedom—freedom to hold, express, and circulate opinions if we are speakers or writers, and to communicate imaginative conceptions of life as best we may if we are artists—and this without let or hindrance so long as we keep within the bounds which citizenship imposes. But this has nothing whatever to do with the freedom of a few monopolists who control the mechanism of communication. Happily there still exist some daily papers and Sunday papers, as well as weekly reviews, monthly magazines and book publishing houses, which are still, in this country, the media for free individual expression of ideas. Thanks to this leaven, the mass-producers have not everything their own way. But they have their way to a dangerous extent, and their influence on a credulous and ignorant public, which at any moment may be exercised in a capricious and arbitrary manner, is not consistent with real democracy. I am not at the moment attempting to offer any solution of Lord Elton's problem, but I do suggest that in approaching it we should, at least, disabuse our minds of the idea that a defence of these monopolies is a defence of freedom.

R. A. SCOTT-JAMES

THE CUL-DE-SAC

By JAN STRUTHER

WHOSE love's a broad highway
 That stretches boldly on
 Before them all the day,
 White and smooth in the sun—
 These, if they will, may run.
 For them there is no need
 To curb the hot-foot speed
 Of their delight, which draws them
 On over dale and hill
 And from each summit shows them
 A landscape lovelier still.

But those whose love's no more
 Than a blind alley—
 A cul-de-sac
 Which can have no other end
 Than turning back
 Or beating with bare hands
 At a wall without a door—
 These must go slowly.
 These at a measured pace
 Must walk,
 And linger in one place
 Often, to gaze and talk ;
 Even retrace
 A yard or two, perhaps,
 Their careful steps,
 And take them over again.
 Their eyes they must restrain
 From seeking the far sky
 And bend them to enjoy
 The small delights which grow beneath their feet :
 Veined, shining, curious pebbles
 They must admire, and stoop
 To finger the small cresses,
 Stonecrops and cushioned mosses
 That creep
 Between the untrodden cobbles
 Of that deserted street.

TWO POEMS

Gently, if they are wise,
 From stage to stage progresses
 The grave, time-honoured dance of their caresses.
 Impetuous hands must bide
 Their hour, till hungry eyes
 Be satisfied ;
 And from a finger's touch
 They must distil as much
 Sweetness and ravishment
 As freer lovers find
 In bodies intertwined.
 They must eke out each kiss
 With its own memory
 And long foretasting of the next one's bliss :
 For kisses treated so
 Shall be less swift to grow
 (Strange alchemy !) from butterfly to bee.

By such fond strategy,
 Such passionate artifice,
 They may a long while cheat
 Themselves into content,
 And not too deeply care
 That fate across the threshold of their street
 Has scrawled " No Thoroughfare."

TWO POEMS

By LILIAN BOWES LYON

DEATH AND SNOW

WINTER'S unearthly charity
 is death and snow.
 The child was still-born up at Strange's farm,
 when no foot, when no breath even, had smudged
 the big white field, but freighted with our woe
 heaven crumbled blindfold in a falling calm.
 By such faint clarity
 was darkness judged.

THE HEDGE-ROW STORY

WHEN fields here lose their colour, when the wood
trailing a hoary wing turns home
to raven night, I reckon up the sum
of rustic evil and clay-spattered good.

I think of the innumerable slow lives whose history
differs a hairsbreadth from the hedge-row story :
thorns in black competition, the roped glory
of gossamer, soon gone,
with berries dipped in blood.

When fields here lose the light, I fear the mystery
of men like trees, that tower but touch the sky
they cannot and are felled one by one,
I think of saint and scarecrow schooled to die ;
their leafless victory stands, where nothing stood.

THE IDIOT

By MARGOT DICK

LOOSE limbed,
with shambling gait,
utterly inco-ordinated.
Speech, tumbling incoherent before thought
from pendulous and drooling lips.
Pale, wandering eyes
which seemed to see things upside down,
and sending to the brain distorted vision,
in recapitulation found no reason.
A silly love of little sounds,
the ticking of a watch,
the clink of pennies ;
an overweening fear of sudden things,
of certain kinds of people,
and of little dogs.
I often wonder why you hated little dogs,
a " Pom " would turn you green with speechless fear,
was it because they got under your feet and yapped ?

Big dogs you didn't mind,
you let them come quite near
and put your hand out timidly
to scratch a matted back
or pull an ear.
And horses too—
You used to give them sugar
(I always wondered where you got it from,)
and smile at them
and if no one was looking
you'd try to loose their harness,
I've seen you cuffed for that.
Then you would whimper
and shuffle off, and stand and stare
into the window of a dress shop,
and laugh and point
and run your fingers through your hair,
until they had to have you moved;
because the ladies that bought
the lovely dresses that you loved
hesitated to come when you were there.
You never were very pleasant to look at;
though I don't suppose
that there is much that would deter
a woman, if she wanted to buy clothes,
still, I can understand she would prefer
a more personable cavalier.
I often wonder too, where you have gone,
I never see you now.
Did they take you and put you in a home?
Or did you die?
And if so, where, and how?
Are you in heaven, peering through the gates
the way you used to peer?
Have they made you whole up there,
or are you as you were?
Do you still tremble with laughter
at some secret joke?
And, in the absence of dogs and horses
do you stroke
the angels' wings?
And are you still
so frightened
by sudden things?

ANOTHER COUNTRY

By WILLIAM PLOMER

“**L**ET us go to another country,
Not yours or mine,
And start again.”

To another country ? Which ?
One without fires, where fever
Lurks under leaves, and water
Is sold to those who thirst ?
And carry dope or papers
In our shoes to save us starving ?

“ Hope would be our passport ;
The rest is understood.
Just say the word.”

Deserters of the vein
And true continuousness,
How should we face on landing
The waiting car, in snow or sand,
The alien capital ?
Necessity forbids.

(Not that reproachful look !
So might violets
Hurt an old heart.)

This is that other country,
That we two populate,
Land of a brief and brilliant
Aurora, noon and night,
The stratosphere of love
From which we must descend,

And leaving this rare country
Must each to his own
Return alone.

POET 1935

By A. C. BOYD

HE shall not make a cool pavilion
 in glades of cyclamen,
 or linger by a lily pool,
 trailing an idle finger ;
 for he must wander
 in a maze of tedious streets,
 jostled by his fellow men.
 Do you wonder
 that he finds no laughter in the slums ?
 no green flute tune
 but the ironic stutter of the drums ?
 Or since bricks ready-made must crumble,
 that he fumbles, building with scarred hands
 power-house of concrete, steel-stanchioned,
 where his love shall command ?
 Beauty's no afternoon mistress,
 and he shall gain her, not up worn ladder,
 but in a cradle of pain
 swung over abyss ;
 is no boy's minion,
 but a man's companion in the cold dawn,
 where difficult joy shall blossom
 like a slow kiss.

LAMENT FOR NIMROD

By A. C. BOYD

WHAT do they hunt now, the small pedestrians ?
 the men in bowler hats who believe in advertisements ?
 Only a driven bird on a rich man's estate,
 the mild bull and the tame bear on the Stock Exchange.
 And they search in Harrods for synthetic panther
 to make a rug for the dining-room floor.
 But the mind's still a jungle, where the parrots scream,
 and unseen in the undergrowth a lion roars.
 There the out-of-date-hunter rides alone with a sword ;
 and though sun shall scorch him, thorns lacerate,
 when the day is ended, birds dumb, the beast prostrate,
 then shall hush fall on the forest ; a fawn leap in the dusk ;
 the swans, carved in moonlight, glide on the dark waters of the lake.

SAILING THROUGH THE AIR

By GEOFFREY FABER

[*A reply to Mr. Herbert Read's article on "The Sweated Author", which appeared in the February number of this journal.*]

MR. READ does it all with the greatest of ease—abolishing publishers, booksellers, circulating libraries, independent printers and binders, and setting up in their place a dictatorship of the authoritate in the shape of an Authors' Co-operative Publishing Guild. Like the daring young man on the flying trapeze he wants to do his own turn before the public and to become his own impresario. Why should the profits stick to the hands of so many showmen?

No showman, no show, is the gist of my answer. If the artiste is going to turn showman, he must learn the elements of his new trade, and understand the conditions in which it is practised. It is a bad omen for his success if he assumes that the show ought to run itself, or that it ought to be built round his own turn. These are the two errors which vitiate both Mr. Read's destructive analysis of the book-trade and his constructive plan.

Since he and I, going by different routes, are after the same thing—better financial reward for good work—I will begin my discussion of his article from this single point of our agreement. It is not, therefore, for me to say that he is wrong when he speaks of himself and the small phalange of similar able, instructed, serious writers (by "author", he says, "I always imply the artist, the scholar, the intellectual") as the oppressed point of an inverted pyramid, although I think he exaggerates the degree of his own oppression. I might protest, with some reason, that the body of the pyramid consists not, as he says it consists, of "the modern book-production business", but of the mass of competing writers, whose productions are successful in meeting a bigger and bigger demand as their positions in the pyramid are nearer to its up-ended bottom. I might also observe that the two authors whom he invites to put the A.C.P.G. on its feet, Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. H. G. Wells, occupy extremely comfortable places in the sun on the pyramid's top flat.

But this is mere fencing. I agree with him that the lot of the serious, idealistic, conscientious author is hard; that it is difficult—and often impossible—for him to earn a living by his best work. I will not go so far as to endorse the opinion which he puts into my own mouth—that the majority of the books now published under the capitalist system are unnecessary and undesirable. In the first place, I do not put the blame upon the capitalist system. In *A Publisher Speaking* I have given my reasons for holding that the system of publishing by private enterprise is preferable to any other. That does not prevent me from recognizing and deploring its faults; it

would be better for us all if fewer books were published, and if the tyranny of the best-seller were diminished. Yet I should hesitate to say that the majority of books published are unnecessary and undesirable. Whatever Mr. Read and I may think of them, these are the books that most people want to read, and neither of us can prevent the public from having what it wants or from refusing to buy what it does not want. Of this cardinal fact Mr. Read's article from beginning to end betrays no consciousness at all.

The very opening of his argument, where he contrasts the rewards of authors to-day with the rewards of authors in the past, helps me to illustrate this essential point. The contrast is necessary to his thesis, which is : the bigger the machine of the book-trade, the smaller the profits of the author. Let me take his first two instances, of which I happen to know a little. He tells us that Motte agreed to pay £300, which he says is equivalent to £1,500 of modern currency, for the anonymous manuscript of *Gulliver's Travels*, thrown into his window from a passing carriage. The implication is that no modern publisher would do anything so generous in similar circumstances. But Mr. Read's account of Motte's offer is either very ingenuous or very disingenuous. Anyone who knows anything about the backstairs of English literature in the early eighteenth century knows that this piece of mystification will have been part of an elaborate series of cryptic negotiations in Pope's characteristic manner. The story actually comes from a letter written by Pope to Swift, in which Pope affects not to know that Swift was certainly the author. The facts are set out by Mr. G. Ravenscroft Dennis in his edition of the Prose Works of Swift, in which (Vol. VIII. p. xii) he says : " as a matter of fact, there seems to be no doubt that Pope was responsible for the negotiations with the publisher." Pope was—as every now and then some author of genius is !—a master-hand at the art of squeezing publishers. But, normally (*loc. cit.*) Swift " never got a farthing by anything he wrote "—a statement which (if one believed it !) would be a little difficult for Mr. Read, in his own context, to digest.

The second instance is that of Gay's poems—that luxurious, two-volume quarto of 1720. Mr. Read says—correctly—that Gay made £1,000 (say £5,000—I am not competent to question these monetary translations) out of these ; and he adds that a modern poet of Gay's standing would be lucky to make as many pence. But he does not tell your readers *how* Gay made this large sum. The explanation is simple. Gay had a fashionable aristocratic connection. His poems were subscribed before publication—not by the booksellers, but by a long list of individual ladies and gentlemen many of whom ordered several copies. What, then, is the worth of this instance to Mr. Read—who, I should suspect, does not even think Gay a considerable poet ? A modern Gay, if there were one, might attend every party of the London season for ten years ; but he would not find many of his acquaintances ready to subscribe handsomely to a very expensive edition of his charming trifles. The nature and the inclinations of society have altered ; not the business instincts of Messrs. Tonson and Lintot.

Of these two instances I happen to know a little ; of Mr. Read's other

examples I am ignorant. I suspect that they are valueless for his purpose. Byron, as he admits, was the best-seller of his time. (Coleridge, whose life was a long succession of financial troubles, would be a more relevant, if a less comfortable, instance.) But the payments Byron had from Murray could be paralleled and beaten in later and modern times. Not, it is true, in modern times for poetry; though in the Victorian era Tennyson was able to support the state of a minor nobleman on his literary dividends. The best-sellers of to-day write in prose. That is one of those changes in public taste for which the book-trade can scarcely be held responsible. A Mrs. Jameson (I learn from Mr. Read) had £400 for a *Guide to the Picture-Galleries of London* in 1840. It is a staggering piece of news; and Mr. Read is quite right in thinking that nobody would now pay £1,200 (his modern equivalent for £400) for such a book. We should not pay it, because we should lose money; and we should lose money because we should sell too small a number of copies to provide the author's remuneration, even if the book cost nothing to produce, to advertise, and to market. Perhaps Mrs. Jameson wheedled her publisher into an act of folly; or perhaps enormous numbers of people in those days were really eager for such a book; or (more probably) it was of that elaborate "withdrawing-room" variety, published at a high price, which once had a fashionable vogue in town and country houses, but is now deader than mutton.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. The rewards of successful authorship are greater to-day, and enjoyed by more writers, than they have ever been. Yachts, islands, palatial London flats and houses, villas on the Riviera—when have popular writers been able to enjoy such luxuries as these before? Moreover, whereas the authors of the past commonly sold their productions outright, they are now able both to have their cake and to eat it. They draw immediate cash advances on account of royalties; if the advances are not earned, it is the publisher who suffers, not the author; if the book goes on selling, the author has his income safe.

As I have already suggested, there have been changes in the direction taken by these rewards. Two principal factors stand out as responsible—though not solely responsible—for these changes. On the one hand, there has been the growth of a large reading-public, of small or moderate means, for the most part a "low-brow", sheep-like public, lacking both the capacity and the desire for serious reading, and asking little from books but sentiment or amusement. On the other hand, there has been the decline and the cultural degeneration of the aristocratic landed society, whose patronage maintained the Augustans. To this second factor may be added a third—the decline and the cultural degeneration of the rural clergy. The gradual operation of these factors in the second half or the last quarter of the nineteenth century was masked by the prosperity of the upper middle class, which modelled its code upon what it believed to be the traditions of the "upper ten". Soon after the beginning of the new century the changes became unmistakable. Increasing taxation, war, disillusionment, more taxation, the cult of the open air, motoring, cinemas, radio, flats—

these things were like the elements of a strong developing solution used upon an over-exposed plate. The old order went with a rush.

Well, it was not all loss. The old literature had more than had its day of flunkeyish dependence. The new literature might be poor, but it was free ; and it has used its freedom with some effect. Here and there, in all classes—in the intelligent remnants of high society, in the professional and academic classes, and among self-educated working men—are a number of individuals, a few thousand perhaps, who use their own judgment and buy, now and again, the book that they want. This is the serious, intelligent, real reading public. It is pitifully small ; but it exists, and it may be the nucleus of something bigger. The *free* literature must look to it for its wages.

These are some of the fundamental facts, which Mr. Read's approach to his scheme at once suggests and ignores. Let us now come nearer to his criticisms of the present organization of the book-trade, and to his proposals for its overthrow.

It was rather startling to me to find him, at the beginning of this section of his article, in a parenthesis which seems hardly essential to his argument and yet challenges an answer, distinguishing between the old and the young publisher, and coming down heavily on the side of the old. The latter, he says, is still the main vehicle of such culture as we possess. The former is driven by the necessity of quick returns upon his borrowed capital into crying, at the top of his voice, none but the most popular, and most perishable, wares. So wilful a perversion of the facts does not recommend confidence in Mr. Read's general diagnosis. There is, naturally, a distinction which draws itself between the long-established business, possessing a line of stock goods and the accumulated goodwill of a century, and the younger business, still engaged in creating its goodwill and compelled to use the maximum of skill and energy in doing so. The latter must pass through two stages. In the first it is using up the capital with which it starts. This stage ends either with failure and liquidation ; or with the achievement of financial equilibrium, and a turnover large enough to provide the necessary current working capital. The business then passes into its second stage, and becomes exactly comparable with its older rivals, except that, of course, its reserves are likely to be smaller. Most publishing businesses are private partnerships or companies ; and neither Mr. Read nor I can have any authentic knowledge of their actual finances. But the balance in favour of the older firms is (I suspect) nothing like so favourable as he assumes. The years have enormously increased the realizable value of the small capital with which the great house of Robinsons was long ago founded. Equally, they have enormously increased the firm's standing charges—now exceedingly difficult to reduce—and they have created vested family expectations of an income enormously greater than the modest income drawn by the great original Josiah Robinson—expectations very difficult to disappoint. Their upstart rival John Brown, having weathered the first few years, is in a more elastic position. His eyes fixed on the future, he can be content to draw a wage for the work he does, and to put back his profits

into his business. There are young firms, already with solid lists, playing for a long life; and there are other firms, snapping aged jaws at every opportunity of a quick profit. It depends on the type of man and the type of business. Sometimes, indeed, a young firm will take a risk refused by the old 'uns. One of my own earliest publications was a translation of Halévy's monumental book *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, which one of the Big Five had refused to undertake, on the ground that it would take too many years before they got their money back.

By and large, however, Mr. Read does not err in saying that a publisher wants to see his money back quickly. Where he errs is in supposing that this is a desire peculiar to the young publisher, and is somehow a modern vice produced by modern capitalism. The plain necessity of every business in every age is to make a running profit. One of the plainest facts about publishing is that a considerable proportion of books, be they never so carefully chosen, do not succeed in paying for themselves. The successes, then, have got to pay for the failures as well as for themselves, and to provide a profit, as well as to cover overhead expenditure. This has, of course, always been so. And few indeed are, or ever have been, the money-makers which do not make some money quickly. So far is Mr. Read from the truth in saying that the poorer authors pay for the more successful. Indeed, his own argument illustrates the fact that, without what the book-trade calls "bread-and-butter lines", long-term serious publishing is impracticable.

I am sorely tempted, at this point, to stay and discuss with him the reasons for the "gradual decline in the standard of books published, and for the elimination of the author who is not an immediate best-seller." I do not differ with him fundamentally about the fact—though it is more of a menace than an accomplished fact. Like him, I have blamed the book-sellers, and I have blamed the publishers. But most of all, after longer experience, I blame the public—not an economic system, nor a social order, but the mental and moral make-up of ordinary people. I must, however, delay no longer over the examination of Mr. Read's proposals.

Let me take, first, the case of his own 6s. book, with which his scheme is prefaced. 1,000 copies were sold to the public, realizing a gross sum of £300. He, as author, received £30 or thereabouts. The balance of £270 went to "middlemen". Can this, he asks, be matched for unfairness in our whole economic system?

Well, let us dissect the figures further. The booksellers will, on the average, have had a discount of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.* So here is the distribution of the proceeds of sales:

Publishers : £170
 Booksellers : £100
 Authors : £30

*Publishers' trade terms vary a good deal. The usual practice is to give 'a third off' on subscription and on 'journey' or stock orders or on orders for several copies. On single 'repeat' orders (commonly called 'pick-ups') the rate is, normally, 25 per cent. Extra discount is given to wholesalers and exporters—5, or even 10, per cent. A round discount of 50 per cent. to exporters is not unusual.

Without seeing the book it is impossible to say what it cost the publishers to produce. Something, almost certainly, above £100, in money paid for paper, printing and binding. Let us put it at £120—that would be too little for some 6s. books, too much for others. They will have spent, perhaps, £30 on advertising. So they have £20 left over. Is this profit? It is not. They have their own expenses to meet. As a rough guide we may put the book's fair share of these expenses at 25 per cent. of their net receipts, before deduction of royalty—*i.e.*, £50. Mr. Read's publishers, therefore, at the end of his "given period" are some £30 short of the money they needed to make out of his book in order to balance their own accounts.

As for the booksellers, if they have indeed sold to the public all the copies they have bought from the publishers, they are lucky. Many of them, no doubt, have copies still on their shelves, which they will never sell. This particular book may, perhaps, go on selling; the booksellers may, in the end, clear their stock. But the question of dead stock cannot be considered in relation to one single instance; it must be taken statistically. And large as the bookseller's share in the proceeds of sales may seem to the uninitiated, it is not larger than is necessary to cover their overhead expenditure, when provision for stock depreciation is included. Precious few of them make a profit, big enough to be grudged them, at the end.

Mr. Read, then, in comparison with others, has not done so badly. He has risked no money of his own; he has presumably enjoyed writing the book; and he has been paid £30. He can't live on that, certainly. But then he is not an employee of his publishers; he is not a wage-earner; he is a man with something to sell, and his reward must depend upon how extensively it can be sold. Reluctantly he resigns himself to this fact, pending the revolution which will secure to the artist a reasonable income, irrespective of his work's commercial value. Meanwhile he protests that he would do much better if only the "middlemen" could be knocked out, and all the costs reduced. There can be no doubt that he would, *if* he were still able to sell as many copies of his book as before.

For this purpose he forms his Guild. It is to begin in a small way and with comparatively little capital. It has "a margin of 90 per cent. (which he reduces later to 85 per cent.) of present costs of production to play with." I do not know what this can possibly mean. From the context it looks as if he were safeguarding an author's royalty of 10 or 15 per cent. But royalties are related to published price, not to costs of production. I give this puzzle up, and pass on.

The costs of production are divided into "essential costs and costs incidental to the present methods of publishing". These are examined under various heads.

1.—*Paper, Printing and Binding.* Standardization is to reduce costs. Type, paper and bindings are to be uniform. Cloth bindings are to be replaced by paper bindings. Dust covers are to be eliminated. Bulk is to be reduced. I fail to see how uniformity of type is going to reduce the principal manufacturing cost—that of composition. Nor can I see how there is to be



SUNDAY—TUILERIES GARDENS, PARIS
Drawing by MUIRHEAD BONE

much saving on paper, except by using inferior paper. Something will certainly be saved by paper bindings ; but the optimistic manager of the Guild will discover, to his consternation, that people will expect him to reduce the prices of his books by considerably more than the amount saved. He will make, I fear, a number of other exasperating discoveries—as that the libraries will refuse to take paper-covered books, because they fall so quickly to pieces, and that the despised dust-cover is a sales-factor of great importance, and that his neat thin books are not considered by a foolish public to be worth the money he asks for them. The whole policy will, in fact, be abandoned almost immediately (if the Guild does not go into liquidation first) ; and the costs of production will remain for the Guild just what they are for the rest of us.

2.—*Advertising*. I am delighted to read that the Guild will practise sobriety of announcement. If Mr. Read knew as much about authors as I do, he would not make this statement quite so positively. But perhaps he knows more than I give him credit for, since he expresses a modest hope that the Guild's advertising costs would not be greater than those of other firms. No saving here apparently !

3.—*Distribution*. "The whole idea is to supply the goods direct to the purchaser." If this is so, then (Mr. Read can take it) the Guild will be boycotted from the start by the booksellers. Is he prepared for this ? He cannot have quite thought this aspect of his proposal out ; for the idea that a publishing guild could compete with other publishers without selling to the bookshops and libraries is too fantastic for discussion. Or so I should have supposed. Even if the Guild were able to secure one popular and quixotic author to risk his sales, in the forlorn hope of eliminating bookshops, by what means is it going to persuade the public to write in and buy ? The analogy of the Book Society is no help to Mr. Read. The Book Society is not a publisher ; it is a special kind of bookshop, doing its business by post certainly, but doing it for members who want, for one reason or another, to have their minds made up for them. Publication of books by newspapers is no help. There will be no great engine of publicity to play with ; and the books it is most wanted to publish are not the sort of books which newspapers boost.

4.—*Staff and Equipment*. Here, again, the fact that the Guild is financed by authors will make little, if any, difference to its running costs. Mr. Read anticipates a saving of 80 per cent., "averaging the sum represented by directors' fees, excess staff engaged in production, touting for best-sellers, travellers and travelling, entertainment, publicity staff, etc., etc." He will find, on the contrary, that in so far as these items are real the Guild will not be able to avoid them, any more than I can. Directors' fees don't count. The principals in any good publishing firm work hard, and draw either a salary or a share of the profits. The Guild must have its own full-time manager—singular or plural according to the volume of its business—like any other publisher. Excess staff is a figment of Mr. Read's brain—complete standardization of format would not save me a single employee,

unless I were prepared to leave everything to the printer, which God forbid ! Touting for best-sellers is, to me, an item without meaning. His other items are inevitable expenses, except perhaps for entertainment. But entertainment, human nature being what it is, does oil the wheels of business as well as of social intercourse.

A very queer sentence concludes his two paragraphs under this head. " If we take into consideration," he writes, " that the system aimed at by the A.C.P.G. excludes the whole mass of ephemeral book-production which has no possible excuse beyond catch-penny profits, then the gross saving would be immense." I have scratched my head over this, and I am still not sure what it means. I suppose that he is looking forward to the day when the Guild will have eliminated all its competitors, and have cut out of existence all the stuff on which the public likes best to browse. There will be a revolution then, I don't doubt ! I picture the offices of the A.C.P.G. fired by an infuriated mob, and Mr. Read dangling from a neighbouring lamp-post in the company of his Publications Committee. But the naïveté of the sentence I have quoted consists rather in the belief that, by abolishing the possibility of quick profits, you effect a tremendous saving of costs. I seemed, as I read it, to be back in the Outland of Lewis Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno*.

Yet Mr. Read is right in his instinctive feeling that something is wrong. There *is* something unhealthy in the present over-production of books ; the lot of the earnest, gifted author *is* harder than it need be. His indignation leads him, not unnaturally, into proposing remedies. But his remedies are, not to beat about the bush, no better than childish. I am very far from wishing to exalt the business faculty. It is, I freely admit, inferior to the artistic faculty. Some men combine them both. But not, I think, Mr. Read. He is not the worse man or artist for that. I acknowledge him as my superior, I salute him as a poet, a critic, a scholar, a philosopher, a prose-writer of distinction. I beg him not to think of himself as a business man.

And what, after all this, am I to think of myself ? Am I the "ephemeral middleman", a necessary vice in an imperfect society, absorbing profits rightfully belonging to other people, destined to survive simply because people *en masse* are as stupid as they are ? I might answer question with question. Is not the persuasion of stupidity a social service ? Is not necessary vice a synonym for virtue ? Is not a middle term essential to every relation ?

Let us look at this " middleman " business more closely. If we conceive a book as an ideal construction, a pattern of thought, to be somehow transferred from the mind of the author to the mind of the reader, then those who facilitate that transference are rightly described as middlemen. The first of the series of middlemen is the author, when he makes the first physical record of his own thought-pattern. In a very simple state of society he performs the entire process of communication himself, singing or reciting to his hearers. The larger and the more complex the society, the more is he obliged to put this task into the hands of others ; and the more

of these others there must be. It becomes necessary that his work should take a durable multipliable form, so that it can be studied at any time, by any number of people, in any place. Moreover, he is not the only singing pebble on the beach. Vast numbers of his fellow-men, enchanted by their own thought-patterns, or ambitious for the fame and the money which a popular thought-pattern can bring to its originator, are struggling to use the same channels of communication. There must be selection and exclusion at the one end, provision of the means of choice at the other. Furthermore, not all those who have something to say know how to say it ; nor can all those, who win their chance of a hearing, win hearers.

So the middlemen—some of them, at least—come to be more than middlemen. They are critics, advisers, doctors, and persuaders in the very exercise of their functions as go-betweens. Often, indeed, they start the artist singing.

This abstract account of the matter minimizes the fact that a book is a concrete thing, an article of use, and—as Mr. Read knows better than most men—an article of ugliness or beauty. With this aspect of his book the author, as such, has nothing whatever to do ; and those who shape it are not middlemen in any sense of the word. The shaping of a book is like the building of a house. Many highly specialized arts contribute to it ; and all must be co-ordinated by the master-builder (who is, in this case, the publisher) with careful regard to the factors of use, beauty and cost. And the art of balancing these factors, delicate and complex in itself, is rendered still more so by the prejudices of the public.

There is some justification, then, for saying that, if the publisher is a middleman, he is a very unusual kind of middleman. And he possesses one other singular characteristic, which I have not yet mentioned, which is wholly ignored by Mr. Read, and which lifts him definitely out of the class of middlemen. He takes the whole financial risk. Mr. Read, it is evident, has no conception of what that risk is. He writes as if the artist's productions were always saleable.

It is not with us that he should be quarrelling—not even with the mass of publishers and booksellers, who are performing the legitimate function of satisfying a demand ; least of all with those publishers and booksellers who are trying, in circumstances of far greater difficulty than he understands, to decoy the mulish public into richer pastures. He is at odds with a society whose values are other than his own. I do not mean that he is a communist amongst the bourgeois ; I mean, simply, that the great bulk of his fellow-citizens are not interested in most of the things that interest him, and would still not be interested in them, after any conceivable revolution ; and that, as an artist selling his work, he can only expect to receive a big reward, when his interest and theirs happen to coincide.

THE TAXI

By A. C. MAYNE

THERE are probably no other people in the world so eminently suited to the vocation of taxi-driving as are the Somalis. To them it is as near the heavenly state as one is likely to attain on earth. To be able to sleep for long hours—sometimes the whole day—on a comfortable seat, and then, with as little effort as it takes to keep awake at all to dash through the streets hooting at one's careless brethren straying across the road . . . ah, it is a king's life. Even the policemen, who carry short sticks for knocking other people on the head, have to give way to the taxi-driver ; it is good, also, to go fast along the straight dry bits of road, leaving a beautiful plume of dust behind in which the good-for-nothing pedestrians can splutter and cough. And then, of course, in Djibouti, there are the gala days for taxi-wallahs—the weekly arrival of the Messageries Maritimes mail from France, with its little load of ship-weary passengers, ideal prey for the dozen or so black drivers who wait on the pier for the launches to come in. If the mail arrives early in the morning the taxis spend all night on the pier, their drivers curled up in the front seats, lulled into a deeper sleep than usual by the lapping of the water along the jetty. The lack of certainty as to whether for six days in the week they would ever get a fare at all never worried them—it was more than compensated for by the entire certainty that they would never have to do any work. Nor was there any cause for worry in the ever-increasing debt to Laljee, Dinshaw & Bros., the importers of the cars—one was sure to be indebted to someone in this world, and there was no other way so pleasant. Besides, it was known that Laljee, Dinshaw & Bros. made a fat "faeda" or profit on all petrol and stores supplied, and since they could give five years' credit on the cars they must be rich enough to wait another week or two for the next instalment. Somalis had even been known to go over to Aden and work in earnest, hoping to save enough money to set up as taxi-drivers. But Hussein was not one of these ; besides, his fluency at French was worth a lot on the pier at Djibouti, and nothing at all over the water.

Although no such precise thoughts were in his mind, Hussein was thinking on these lines as he made another few strokes before sitting back in the "felucca" and resting his arms on the paddle set crosswise over the sides of the boat. Lean and well-built, with an astonishingly finely-shaped head, he had taken up fishing as the least strenuous way of earning a few francs ; but on these days without wind he almost wished he had become a coolie in the Customs Sheds instead. No good fish could be had much nearer than Maskali Island, some seven miles out. The Arab fishermen would start out shortly after midnight if it was too calm to sail, but

that was no life for Hussein. The Somalis were not "people of the sea," like the coastal Arabs. He had only got the loan of the boat because Saleh the Bedani was sick with the sweating fever, and Saleh would soon be well again now.

Raising his eyes to the strip of low sandbank that formed Maskali Island, a few miles ahead, Hussein caught sight of a steamer, coming in past the point and bearing away to the west before it made for Djibouti anchorage. Furrowing his brow he racked his brains—which would that be? Ah yes! The *Aramis*, one of the two white-and-silver Messageries liners, with short mushroom funnels and the lines of a cruiser. One day he would be lolling back in a cushioned seat on the pier-head, waiting to hail the first launch-load of passengers, instead of rocking up and down miles from shore on a sea that Allah had emptied of fish.

The *Aramis* had cleared Maskali Island now, and was creeping over a vivid mauve-blue sea, two faint, dark, diverging lines of ripples streaming out in an ever-widening wash behind, and a feather of white showing where the silver bows cut into the water. The low rays of the early-morning sun lit up the ship as though she were held by gigantic footlights—a sight to be admired! And in stately silence she moved across the background of the distant Tadjoura mountains. No smoke from her short funnels marred the sky, which was a clear and paler blue than the sea at the foot of the tinted hills. It was a lovely scene, in silver and shades of blue. Soon the climbing sun would spoil it by the harshness of its intense light, leaving only a dazzling shimmer below and a brazen sky above.

But to Hussein there was no beauty in the morning. The ship was a floating gold-mine, at which he could not dig. The day held for him the choice of bottom-fishing for small rock fish, unremunerative at the best of times, or a long paddle in the sweltering heat and a struggle for the big fish in the deeper water beyond the island. Peering into the coral depths below he made up his mind, characteristically. He shipped the paddle, baited three hooks on a small line, and gently let them down until the sinker underneath them rested lightly on a delicate tree-like growth of white coral.

All day long he leaned over the side of the felucca, from time to time hauling in a catch or re-baiting the line. Except for the little noises of his own movements, or the occasional flapping of a caught fish struggling to get back into the water, the silence was absolute. Towards the late afternoon the *Aramis* stood out to sea again; no other vessel had come in or gone out all day. The Arab fishermen were still far beyond Maskali Island; they would return with the evening breeze. Hussein estimated for the fourth time the weight of his catch and how much it would come to at a franc-and-a-quarter a kilo of cleaned fish. He had eaten nothing all day but was not appreciably hungry. After the manner of Somalis he could live for several days on a few handfuls of rice alone, without discomfort. He would catch three more of the yellow-and-black-striped kind and then make for shore. The sticky sweat glistened on his skin, shining with high lights on

the curves of muscles and showing sepia black in the hollows and shadows.

The sunset colours were already fading in the west when the fisherman, chanting to himself a tuneless and ever-repeated song, threaded in and out amongst the native dhows in the harbour, made fast his felucca, and waded ashore half-way along the jetty. The lights on the pier, and along the road leading into the town, past the Governor's Palace and Customs Sheds, twinkled yellowly. There was no one around; most good Moslems were praying, and the traders and Indian shopkeepers and clerks had not yet come out of their offices for their evening walk.

Naked but for his loin-cloth, and the little bundle of fish wrapped up in his shirt, Hussein passed through the Place Menelik, the main square of the town, with its two dingy hotels and little taxi-rank. Ah, look at the lazy drivers sleeping there, with their full stomachs, and coins shoved away in their belts—after charging plump white-helmeted Frenchmen twice the legal fare for a trip round the town. . . . That was a life, as Allah bore witness! And if anyone should awake them and disturb their slumbers during the night it would only be to put more money into their pockets! All day on the water his thoughts had been playing round the idea—it was becoming an obsession and guiding-light to him—but how, oh, how could he get the money? Six thousand francs deposit was all that he needed. . . . Fishing was stupid, who had ever become rich as a fisherman? He *must* get a taxi one day, but how? Impossible to steal the money in so small a town.

Making his way by narrow back streets to the fish market, he pushed through the usual medley of noises and smells to the stall of Mahmud, the Mohammedan Indian who bought for the native cafés. There was a crowd round the stall, but little business was being done, to judge from the singular lack of shouting and quarrelling. Everyone was listening to one man, a Somali, who wore a smart pair of shoes on his bare feet and a European shirt and coat above the long "footah" or loin-cloth that reached to his ankles. Catching sight of Hussein, Mahmud, the fat proprietor, shouted: "Come! Hussein. See who it is! Your half-brother Ibrahim came back from Aden to-day on the French boat—and see, he has money and clothes!"

* * * * *

The half-brothers, sitting on either side of a primitive kerosene-oil lamp, talked until late into the night; all the other lights in the native village had been extinguished. Ibrahim was returning to Aden in a few days, to take a wife and set up as a retail corn-merchant. By the beard of the prophet, what a stroke of luck was his! Money had been given to him, open-handedly and with both hands, by the mad "feringhis,"* who ruled Aden. It was this point that interested Hussein, and set his mind working with all its powers of cunning and concentration. And how had the money

* Originally "Franks"—a term used for any white men—*e.g.* Englishmen.

come to be given him ? " Mashallah—in the name of God—they GAVE it to him, four hundred rupees—over twenty-five thousand francs. Just think of it ! And all for merely opening his mouth ! "

At length Hussein got the exact story out of him. Ibrahim had been walking home with a fellow-coolie ; they had bunkered coal all day on the wharf, and were returning to Maalla village to sleep—suddenly the glare of motor-car lamps rushed up from behind, there was a scream, a thud, and a swerve on the part of the car. All over in a flash, and the little red tail lamp gradually grew smaller and vanished down the long, straight Maalla road. Ibrahim found himself walking alone ; his companion lay in the roadway, a black twisted shape on the grey-black road surface. His back was broken. Ibrahim ran on to Maalla village and called for help ; a small cortège of villagers had carried the unfortunate coolie to the native police-station.

The next day, as Ibrahim left the coal-wharves, a small and consumptive Banyan clerk of Hajeebhoy, the Indian lawyer, accosted him : " I have a message for you, ya Somali, from my master—will you follow me, away from the others ? " Ibrahim consigned the Banyan to Gehenna itself, and turned away ; but a few steps later he was arrested by a hand on his elbow. " It means money to you, ya Somali, it is concerning the accident on the road, yesterday." And so Ibrahim followed the messenger, and listened. It had been the car of Colonel Smith Sahib, the " ras " or head of the Aden Salt Works. He was a rich man. If Ibrahim would appear in court to-morrow and testify that he had heard the " feringhis " in the car singing—that they were " sakran "—drunk—the car had swerved on to the foot-path and knocked his companion into the road—the " feringhis " had laughed and gone on. . . . Ibrahim would swear nothing for an infidel Banyan clerk—besides, they were walking in the roadway, not the footpath . . . but next day he was ushered into the presence of the great Hajeebhoy himself. There would be two thousand rupees to be paid by Colonel Smith Sahib ; Hajeebhoy would see that Ibrahim got four hundred of them if he swore—but on one condition : that he kept his mouth entirely shut except whilst testifying in the court house. If he spoke to another soul about it Hajeebhoy would come to know, and see that he ended in prison for bearing false witness. Rather frightened, Ibrahim swore, and two weeks later he received four hundred rupees.

Hussein slept badly that night, and the next day he did not fish at all. His mind was struggling with a vast idea, an idea that gave him a glimpse of paradise—an idea that he could not fully grasp. He spent much of the next few days amongst the booths of the petition-writers, where there was always a stream of Somalis and Arabs getting letters of complaint or litigation written out in French. The petition writers were mainly Indians, and their capacity to write bad French was their only genuine qualification ; but they acted as unofficial lawyers for the poorer people. By discreet enquiries, and over tin mugs of tea with clerks from the Police Court and Tribunal, Hussein was at last able to find out what he wanted to know and

crystallize his great idea. It remained but to find a method of executing it. A true Somali, he had no fear—except that of being found out.

First he waited until his half-brother had returned to Aden. Next, he took up the occupation of oyster-fishing. Oysters—though not of the pearl variety—could be got by collecting them at low water off the branches and trunks of the mangrove trees that fringed the harbour. The chief medical officer of the town had condemned them as being unsound, and forbidden the sale of all oysters having signs of tree-bark on the shells, but Hussein was not going to the trouble of fishing up the few specimens of the rock kind that could be got from long hours on the deep water. For several days he collected tree oysters, and laboriously he scraped off as far as possible all signs of wood bark on them. His mother and sister, who worked as coffee cleaners in the warehouses of the town, reviled him for this stupid task. It was stupid even for Hussein. The time spent in scraping the shells was such that he could never sell many in a day; and then he dared not hawk them to the French houses—only a few Greeks and Armenians would buy them, and they paid but half the price that the French would give.

Hussein argued that if his mother and sister would help him prepare the shells instead of cleaning coffee at six francs a day they would all earn more. After much persuasion, and because coffee work was slacking off with the hot weather, Hussein got Uwalu, his sister, to join him on the strip of shore below the Customs Sheds and help him in the scraping. They could use the shed lights, that struck out on to the mud flats and water's edge, for working after sunset. Hussein had feared his plan would miscarry through not getting his sister to help him in time. It was only just in time—the day was the 14th of July, and that night there would be a "fantasia" and dancing in the Governor's Palace until very late. The road from the Palace to the town ran along the jetty, and past the wall of the Customs Sheds. The wall was a great high one, with no street lights along its length, and owing to the straightness of the road and lack of turnings cars usually dashed past it. Hussein and Uwalu chipped away at their shells at the sea end of a narrow lane that bounded and ran along one side of the Customs Wall.

As the night wore on the pile of shells grew, and Uwalu became tired. "Let us go now, Hussein, we have at least ten francs' worth, and I am weary of this work."

But it was essential to Hussein's plan to wait a little longer. At length he stood up, straightened his back, and told Uwalu to put the shells into the basket whilst he got a kerosene tin full of water to keep them fresh till the morning. As Hussein splashed out into the shallow water and filled the tin he glanced at the twinkling lights of the Governor's Palace. Yes, cars were beginning to leave. He could hear engines being started up, and the beams of headlights swept across the harbour as cars turned down the drive into the road. Faintly, from over the water, away out across the starlit darkness, came the chanting of Arab fishermen, as they moored their dhows at the far end of the jetty, in the deep water. No more going

out to Maskali Island for Hussein—no more stupid collecting and chipping of oysters. . . . He would be sitting outside the Palace in his own car next time there was a "fantasia," smoking a cigarette and talking with the other drivers. He would be at the end of the pier, smiling and joking in his second-person-singular French next time the *Aramis* came in.

For a moment he was frightened—supposing his plan miscarried? But that was impossible, it was all Allah's will, and with the end in sight he could not abandon it now! Oh the hours he had spent gazing at the shiny brown six-cylinder Chevrolet roadster in Laljee, Dinshaw & Bros.' little show window! Lately he had only looked at it from the other side of the road—he knew not why—but every curve and brilliant piece of nickel plating was graven in his memory. Most of all he loved the mascot on the radiator—a model all-silver aeroplane, with a glittering little propeller that would turn in the wind made by the car.

With a muttered prayer, "Bismillah rahman er-rahim—in the name of God the all-compassionate the all-merciful," Hussein hoisted the full can of water on to his shoulder and rejoined Uwalu. Every few minutes now the lights of a car detached themselves from the double row of twinkling pin-points below the Palace, and crept nearer, till they vanished behind the Customs Sheds and reappeared as a flying streak of illumination at the top end of the little alley-way.

Hussein had often timed it: if he walked slowly up the alley just as a car left the Palace drive he would usually arrive a trifle ahead of it at the point where the alley-way ran behind the shelter of the high wall into the main road. Most cars kept very close to the wall, since no traffic could come in on that side, and on the far side of the main road a street branched off to the town—a street to which it was as well to give a wide berth. He shifted the heavy four-gallon tin to a more comfortable position on his shoulder. Another car was turning out of the Palace drive.

"Uwalu, are you ready? Are all the shells in the basket?"

"I wait for you."

"The evening is very late, but we have done well. You carry the basket, it is not so heavy as my tin; start on up the lane, I follow you."

Slowly Uwalu placed the basket on her head and walked on in advance. One hand steadied the burden, and with the other she tightened the knot on her left shoulder, where the two ends of the single piece of cloth that formed her dress met. Hussein paused a moment, and then followed behind her. She reached the end of the lane as the lights of an oncoming car shone down the main road, and stood there a moment, an erect and graceful figure, outlined by the reflected light from the white dust of the road. She was still in the shadow of the wall.

"Wait, do not go out into the road," shouted Hussein.

"All right," she answered, without turning her head, for the weight of the basket was heavy upon it.

Hussein judged it perfectly.

With a push in the centre of her back he sent her staggering out into

the road, at the same time upsetting his can of water and screaming out : " Be careful, you fool ! In the name of Allah come back. What are you doing ? Look out ! "

The car caught Uwalu just before she fell. The near front wing grazed her hip and side, bruising her and half-turning her round, and the handle of the door struck her full in the chest and tore through her left breast, knocking her down, senseless. She fell in a bleeding heap on to the roadway, and the oyster shells scattered far and wide. Hussein screamed and ran after the rapidly slowing-down car. " *Sacrés français, qu'est-ce que tu fais ! Tu n'as pas des yeux ! Tu as tué ma sœur—mon Dieu, mon Dieu, tu es bougrement fou ! Cochons ! imbeciles ! Couillons !* " Catching up with the car he opened the door and made as if to fight the driver, shouting curses at him in Somali.

Then Hussein ran back to Uwalu, who lay as she had fallen, motionless, her dress half-torn off her. Her breast was terribly lacerated, and the flesh torn away down to the ribs themselves. What seemed to be her heart was pulsating gorily. The blood that had run out in little rivulets congealed and dried as a muddy paste in the dust of the roadway. Two other cars had now stopped on the scene, and an excitedly gesticulating crowd of Frenchmen and Somalis showed fantastically in the glaring headlights. In the second car to appear there were three ladies, in evening dress. On seeing what had happened one of them screamed :

" Oh, la pauvre, la pauvre petite ! Amène-la vite à l'hôpital, Charles—oh la pauvre, la pauvre petite ! "

Overhead the stars shone with tropical brilliance from a black velvet sky.

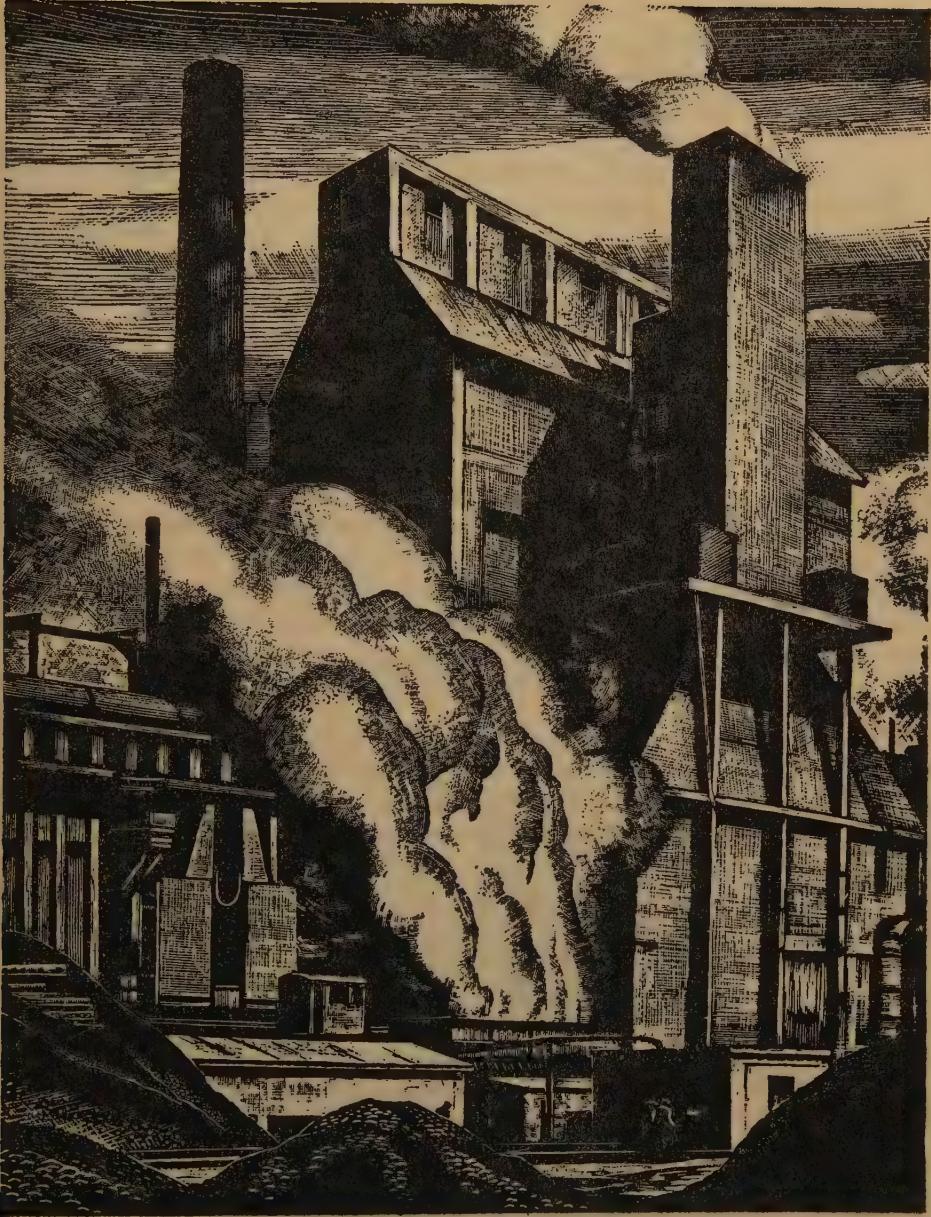
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The *Aramis* rode at anchor, serene and silver-white, some three-quarters of a mile from the end of the jetty. A cluster of launches and dug-outs hung around her sides, and down the gangway white-clad and white-helmeted passengers climbed into the waiting " vedettes." Slowly, like fat and distant water-beetles, a little knot of launches left the cluster at the foot of the gangway and spread out into a rough line, heading for the shore.

Hussein ran his car right to the edge of the jetty, within easy hailing distance of the landing sightseers, and extinguished his cigarette against the floorboards. He put the stump into one of the dash-board pockets. The first launch was discharging its load on to the steps of the jetty.

" Viens, messieurs mesdames. Fais le tour de Djibouti ! Je prends cinq personnes pour cinquantes francs—le tour de la ville, village indigène, femmes somalies, je te montre tout. Viens, messieurs mesdames, je suis bon chauffeur, je fais jamais accident. . . . "

The shining propeller of the little silver aeroplane on the radiator turned, stopped and turned again in the breeze that blew in from the direction of Maskali Island, across the sea.



COKE OVENS

Wood-Engraving by W. NORMAN JANES

SOME NOTES ON MY OWN POETRY

By EDITH SITWELL

ALITTLE while ago, a certain Dr. F. R. Leavis discovered that I belong to the history of publicity rather than that of poetry; and this bad-mannered remark having been eagerly repeated by that sunny-natured veteran trumpeter for attention Mr. Wyndham Lewis, I shall regard it as a permission from these gentlemen to explain what is almost the most misunderstood poetry of our time. For indeed an incredible amount of nonsense is talked about my poems even by well-intentioned persons. I am, it seems, "the Poet of Childhood." Yet out of the hundred and two poems I have preserved (five of them are very long), nine short poems have as a SUBSIDIARY theme, childhood—and this is scarcely a large proportion. These poems, too, are occupied far more with sensory impressions than with the mind of the child. As well as being "the Poet of Childhood," I am also, it appears, "the Poet of Artificiality," and owe everything to the Russian Ballet—I imagine because I sometimes use satyrs and nymphs as protagonists, though these are only symbols :

Of strange long past fruit-hairy springs—
Beginning of first earth things.

My artificiality is such, that when I am writing of emotion, I try to strip the passion down to the barest possible expression, a quintessential simplicity. When my poems deal with emotions they are always the most simple and primitive emotions of simple and primitive people. I write of the broken heart of a girl whose love was betrayed for the sake of a harlot—of a mother who, murdered by her son, tries to rise from her grave to comfort him and save him. The girl weeps for one who, living, is yet :

This Dead, who fell that he might satisfy
The hungry grave's blind need,—

That Venus stinking of the Worm !
Deep in the grave, no passions storm :
The worm's a pallid thing to kiss ;
She is the hungering grave that is
Not filled, that is not satisfied !
Not all the sunken Dead that lie
Corrupt there, chill her luxury.

The mother, lying in her grave, remembers that

. . . lovely was the summer light
Those days. . . I feel it through this night.
Once Judas had a childish kiss,
And still his mother knows but this.

My poetry is also, it appears, "old-fashioned"—just as before, when

only six people read it, it was terrible by reason of its eccentric modernity. But to me, the dressmaker's art and the poet's are not comparable. I conclude it is called old-fashioned because, as one of the finest living poets wrote to me recently: "Your world is far removed from the sound of the Poetry Contractors, with their electric drills and demolition gangs." I was brought up in the country, and mine is a country world. But it is a debatable point if a world of growing things not made for hands is not as real and lasting as a world of machinery, liable to go wrong at any moment.

Many of the poems dealing with this world of growing things have a goat-footed rustic sound, deliberately uncouth, a hard quick uncouth rhythm, so that we are not listening to the peasants' boots falling on a soft soil, but to the far earlier sound of satyr-hoofs falling on a ground that is harsh and sharp with spring, or mad and harsh with summer. At moments the shortness and roundness of the lines give the effect of small uncouth buds breaking from the earth—daisy buds, for instance.

Sometimes, again, we find:

. . . A countryside where people know
That Destiny is wingless and bemired,
With feathers dirty as a hen's, too tired
To fly—where old pig-snouted Darkness grovels
For life's mired rags among the broken hovels—

a countryside where everything we see is a symbol of something beyond this world—and where:

Each dull blunt wooden stalactite
Of rain creaks, hardened by the light,
Sounding like an overtone
From some lonely world unknown,—

but where the people live the life of growing things, rooted deeply in the mould, and understanding only the world of the unawakened senses, and not the significance of their language—seeing the stars as no more remote than the flowers in their own potting-sheds, and the vast and unknown splendours as something homely, so that death and the eternal stars are no more strange.

It seemed a low-hung country of the blind,—
A sensual touch upon the heart and mind,
Like crazy creaking chalets hanging low
From the dark hairiness of bestial skies
The clouds seem, like a potting-shed where grow
The flower-like planets for the gay flower-show:
Gold-freckled calceolarias,
Marigolds, cinerarias,
African marigolds, coarse-frilled
And cherries, apricots, all chilled
With dew, for thus the bright stars seemed
To cottage windows where none dreamed.
But country gentlemen who from their birth,

Like kind red strawberries, root deep in earth
 And sleep as in the grave, dream far beyond
 The sensual aspects of the hairy sky
 That something hides, they have forgotten why !
 And so they wander, aiming with their gun
 At mocking feathered creatures that have learnt
 That movement is but groping into life,—
 Under rough trees like shepherds' goatish tents.

At other moments we find poems whose movement is like the growth of a slower plant-life, as in these lines from "Romance":

When the green century of summer rains
 Lay on the leaves, then like the rose I wept.
 For I had dwelt in sorrow as the rose
 In the deep heaven of her leaves lies close.
 Then you, my gardener, with green fingers stroked my leaves
 Till all the gold drops turned to honey. Grieves
 This empire of green shade when honeyed rains
 And amber blood flush all the sharp green veins
 Of the rich rose ?

So doth my rose-shaped heart
 Feel the first flush of summer ; love's first smart
 Seemed no more sorrowful than the deep tears
 The rose wept in that green and honeyed clime.

It must be understood that no poet arranges the texture consciously before writing a poem ; but when certain objects have been deeply observed, and their inner significance contemplated, then all this transmutes itself into the medium of poetry, and one finds certain conjunctions and co-operation of vowels and consonants resulting as inevitably as the conjunction and co-operations of blood, nerves, muscles, and tissue. The poet then sees how this result is obtained. Take two lines of the fragment just quoted :

When the green century of summer rains
 Lay on the leaves, then like the rose I wept.

the ethereal quality of the plant-world is given by the sequence of light vowel-sounds, and its contact with us by the occasional dark sounds and the final sinking down or imprisonment of the ethereal in the clogged *pt* sound of 'wept.' Then comes the slow movement of thought, as it moves in sympathy with the slow movement of the growth of the plant. This slowness is produced by the particular use of consonants placed close together, and alliterations placed externally and internally :

For I had *dwelt* in sorrow as the rose
 In the deep heaven of her *leaves lies close*

and so on through the fragment. In line 5 there is a continual conjunction of terminations, middles and beginnings of words in double consonants,

Then you, my gardener, *with green fingers stroked* my leaves
 Till all the *gold drops* turned to honey. Grieves

etc.—

and again on line 8, where the *mb* of 'amber' and the *bl* of 'blood' are only separated by a neutral vowel, making the line sound like thick honey. The quadruple alliterations and double consonants in :

Feel the first flush of summer, love's first smart

(the alliterations are sometimes at the beginning, sometimes in the middle or at the end of words)—these add to the slow plant-growing movement of the poem.

Many poems in *Bucolic Comedies* are attempts to develop sense-values. The subject underlying others (especially in "Façade") deals with materialism and the world crumbling into dust ("Said King Pompey" and "The Bat" are examples). Again, many, in all sections, deal with the growth of consciousness. Sometimes it is that of a person who had always been blind, and who, suddenly endowed with sight, must *learn* to see. Sometimes it is a consciousness awakening from the earth-sleep, perceiving for the first time—and so with a clearer, sharper vision than that of the ordinary sense dulled with custom—piercing down to the essence of the thing seen, knowing that the ephemeral six-rayed snowflake is the counterpart of the six-rayed crystal in its eternity, and so guessing the immense design of the world, "the correspondences whereby men may speak with angels." Sometimes, again, it is the fumbling of the unawakened consciousness towards a higher state, and sometimes it is a purely animal consciousness, the beginning of all earthy things. A flower, in "Springing Jack," is a :

Clear angel-face on hairy stalk ;
(Soul grown from flesh, an ape's young talk.)

"Dark Song" is a poem about the beginning of things and their relationship, the fire that purrs like an animal and has a beast's thick coat (the crumbling furry black coal), a girl whose blood has the dark pulse and instincts of the earth :

The fire was furry as a bear
And the flames purr . . .
The brown bear rambles in his chain
Captive to cruel men
Through the dark and hairy wood . . .
The maid sighed, "All my blood
Is animal. They thought I sat
Like a household cat ;
But through the dark woods rambled I . . .
Oh, if my blood would die !"
The fire had a bear's fur
It heard and knew . . .
The dark earth furry as a bear,
Grumbled too !

The long, harsh, animal-purring R's and the occasional double-vowels : in 'bear,' and 'fire,' though this last is divided by an R, these convey the

uncombatible animal instinct. The poem is built on a scheme of these harsh R's, alternating with dulled R's which, with the thickness of the BR's and the MB's in

The brown bear rambles in his chain

gives the thickness of the bear's dull fur. The sinking or dulled dissonances ending some lines instead of rhymes, 'bear'—'purr,' 'chain'—'men,' the way in which, in the midst of this darkness there is an occasional sharp, high, insistent vowel-sound, these are deliberately meant to convey a darkened groping. Only once is there a *rising* dissonance (again purposeful) towards the end.

If my images appear strange, it is because I have senses like those of primitive peoples, and because I try to pierce down to the essence of a thing seen, heightening its significance by endowing it with attributes which at first seem alien but which are actually related; by producing its own quintessential colour (sharper, brighter than that seen by an eye grown stale); and by stripping it of all unessential details. The apparent strangeness comes, too, from the fact that I try to weld all expression into an image, and not remove it into a symbol or squander it into a metaphor. To take at random two images: "Hen-cackling grass" is quaker-grass, and the image was suggested by the colour and dustiness of the pods being like the colour and dustiness of a hen, and by the fact that the movement makes me think of the quick dry sound of cackling.

Hoarse as a dog's bark
The heavy leaves are furled

referred to the sharp way in which certain leaves jut from their branches—and their rough, furry, yet sharp quality. The young leaves of the chestnut spring from their branches in just that way, and are thickly bunched, too, and rough yet sharp.

Many of the poems in "Façade" are abstract patterns, deliberate and extremely difficult technical experiments in the effect on rhythm of the use of rhyme, assonances and dissonances. The rhythm and speed of a skilful unrhymed poem differs from the rhythm and speed of a rhymed poem containing the same number of feet, and both the rhymed and the unrhymed poems differ slightly in these respects from a poem ending with dissonances or assonances, but containing the same number of feet. Again, assonances and dissonances put at different places within the lines and intermingled with equally skilfully placed internal rhymes have an immense effect upon rhythm and speed, and the effect on rhythm, and sometimes, but not always, speed, is different from that of lines containing elaborately schemed internal rhymes without assonances or dissonances.

A well-meaning person announced recently that my poem "Gold Coast Customs" is a lament over the demolition of "Troy Park" by the new order. Having survived with difficulty the apoplectic fit brought on by this statement, I may perhaps be allowed to write a few words about the poem



Fisher

‘A.E.’ [GEORGE RUSSELL]

Etching by A. HUGH FISHER

*From the fifty-third annual Exhibition of the Royal Society of
Painter-Etchers and Engravers*

in question. "Gold Coast Customs" is about the present spiritual state of the world, materialism, the besotted, darkened pleasures of the rich and their cannibalistic cruelty to the destitute poor. It is built on three tiers—the negro swamp, which is the spiritual state, the physical slum of starvation, and its mockery and mirror, the foul moral slum of the heartless rich.

Where the rickety houses
 Rock and rot,
 Lady Bamburgher airs
 That foul plague-spot
 Her romantic heart.
 From the cannibal mart,
 That smart Plague-cart,
 Lady Bamburgher rolls where the foul news-sheet
 And the shambles for souls are set in the street.
 And stuck in front
 Of this World-tail Worm,
 Stuck in front
 Of this World's confession—
 Like something rolled
 Before a procession,
 Is the face, a flimsy wormskin thing
 That someone has raked
 From the low plague-pit
 As a figure-head
 For Corruption dead,
 And a mask for the universal Worm.

'Rock' is a shrunken echo of 'rickety,' 'rot' is a still deader echo of 'rock,' and this is deliberate; so is the dissonance of 'plague-spot' and 'heart.' The last syllable of 'romantic' is a crazy reversed echo of the first syllable of 'rickety' and its hollow, shrunken counterpart 'rock.' The assonances, dissonances and rhymes within the lines: 'Rock and rot,' 'that smart Plague-cart,' 'Lady Bamburgher rolls where the foul news-sheet—And the shambles for souls are set in the street,' give a sort of rocking balance, so does the arrangement of three-syllabled words; whilst that of the intermingled one-syllabled and two-syllabled words gives a drum-beating sound. Here, then, is the moral slum of the rich, and its mirror, the slum of the starved.

The rat deserts a room that is bare,
 But Want, a cruel rat gnawing there
 Ate to the heart, all else was gone,
 Nothing remained but Want alone.
 So now I'm a gay girl, a calico dummy,
 With nothing left alive but my feet
 That walk up and down in the Sailor's Street.

This poem is, indeed, the vision of :

The sick thick smoke from London burning,
Gomorrah turning
Like worms in the grave,
The Bedlam daylight's murderous roar,
Those pillars of fire the drunkard and whore
Dirty souls boiled in cannibal cookshops to paper
To make into newspaper, flags . . . they caper
Like gaping apes. Foul fires we see,
For Bedlam awakes to reality.

The drunken burning,
The skin drums galloping,
In their long march still parched for the sky,
The Rotten Alleys where beggars groan
And the beggar and his dog share a bone ;
The rich man Cain that hides within
His lumbering palaces where Sin
Through the eyeless holes of Day peers in,
The murdered heart that all night turns
From small machine to shapeless Worm
With hate, and like Gomorrah burns—
These put the eyes of Heaven out,
These raise all Hell's throats to a shout,
These break my heart's walls toppling in,
And like a universal sea
The nations of the Dead crowd in.

I am told that the young gentlemen in overalls call me a "poet of escape"; but I do not know any Bolshevik poem which 'escapes' less than the above. The experiencing and writing of this poem were the most anguished experience of my life of the mind; and now some well-meaning person claims that it is some tea-table lament over the shutting up of country houses on account of heavy death-duties and super-tax.

MISS BAKER

By V. S. PRITCHETT

WHEN Easter came she knew that her time of fasting was drawing to a close : for three weeks she had not spoken. God had given her nothing to say to the world. She had prayed—for prayer always transposed her great sorrow—but He had become very small and far away like a very high and soundless bird. Yet in these days of the triumph of spring and of His Son, she had heard Him moving. On Easter Monday she got up from her chair and looked into the mirror and spoke for the first time.

"There you are, Miss Baker!" she said to her image. "Your hair is beautiful and yellow." She was thinking of the first daffodils.

She watched the image, expectantly crinkling her pale eyes—there might be a miracle—but her lips in the mirror did not move.

"Poor darling," said Miss Baker to the image at last. "You are caught." And she smiled sadly though there was a fine curl of slyness at the corner of her lips. It was at this point when she might have broken down in a passion of sadness, when she had already the silver hairbrush in her hand raised to smash the mirror into a great gasping star that the Voice of God stopped her with a whisper. So quietly the Voice spoke that for the moment she might have been deceived. It said, "Go ye into all the world." That was all. She wanted to hear more but when nothing came she understood.

She washed her face and brushed back her yellow hair over her ears to hear and understand the Voice again. She put on her white dress for her purity. "You are good to me, too good to me, Miss Baker," she said to the image in the mirror, thanking it with her repentance.

Then with a devout languor, very slowly before the glass she raised her arms in their long white sleeves, leaned back and closed her eyes : she was crucified upon herself.

When she came down from the cross the devils had gone. She put on a white straw hat with a broad brim and daisies round the crown. She took her umbrella, saw that the gas was turned off and that her key was in her bag and every window closed, and went out. To her surprise night had already fallen and the stairs were dark. Down six flights of stairs she went lower and lower into all the world. Sounds of traffic and of people walking came nearer and nearer from the street, starting like birds from her descending feet and rising in flocks until as she stepped down on to the pavement she was surrounded by them.

But like a ghost in her white dress she moved untouched by the things and creatures she touched. It was a cold night and people were wearing coats and hurrying. Their breath puffed out in clouds. The world smelled. It smelled of beer and frying meat, of vegetables in the market, of motor-

cars and oil, and the steam of a laundry. The world made noises. The scrawling noise of boots on the pavement, the sizzle of motor-car wheels, the deep mayoral bark of horns, the vicissitudes of voices. She walked through the music of a barrel organ, through halls and fountains of music, but her mind listened to none of the sounds that her ears heard. When she stopped dead still and listened, it was to hear again the guiding Voice.

She prayed in these moments humbly, not with the arrogance of expecting to be heard, though when she opened her eyes again it seemed the world was more contented and long and happily married. The eyes of the houses were alight and in the early darkness, she thought, they looked so nice and comfortable like old gentlemen with spectacles on, smoking their pipes. She walked on and on, from street to street, going into as many streets as she could and saying nothing, her lips very full and still and slightly smiling and the colour of her eyes fading as the inner light shone brighter. Wherever she took her whiteness she could feel the pain of the world going away.

Yet she was not white and pure enough for the Voice did not come again though she listened for it. Why did the Voice not speak again? Perhaps an hour had passed or two or three hours. People looked at her. Then when she opened her eyes from prayer she saw on the opposite side of the street a shining pool. I do not hear His Voice, she said, but He leadeth me beside still waters, even though it is only a puddle. And she had a very clever pouting and joking look on her face as she waited for the traffic to pass and crossed the street. On the pavement she found a dry, clean spot, dusted it with her handkerchief and sat down. "It is not very comfortable," she said aloud in case people should think her foolish, "but it will do." Very decently she pulled her dress down to her ankles and sighed, closing her eyes but too tired for prayer, and in those unguarded minutes an errand boy went by and staggered into a long, walking-backwards stare. An old woman passed with a chain of three children walking backwards, too. A young man in a mackintosh took his pipe out of his mouth, swivelled round and then turned back to her:

"Excuse me—er—miss," he said. "Allow me," he said touching her shoulder. "Are you ill?"

She was charming and frigid to him. His face was stupid with health.

"No, I am merely resting, thank you," she said.

A fat carpenter with a sandy moustache, and a bag of tools in his hand came up and nudged the young man.

"What's up?" he asked. "Bin knocked down?"

"Dunno," said the young man. "Says she's resting."

The carpenter stared and then bent down himself.

"Anything the matter, miss?" he said.

"Nothing, thank you. It's not very comfortable but I am resting," she said.

Oh, for five minutes' rest! Would God not give her just five minutes? Great weariness was streaming up out of the pavement into her and the

street was heaving as if in it some tide had turned. Three young girls from a factory stopped chattering to look at her. Two of them giggled with embarrassment, but the third who was dark and compassionate knelt at Miss Baker's feet and looked clearly into her eyes.

"There is nothing the matter," said Miss Baker before the girl could speak. "I am only waiting for Someone. Please go!" she said, turning to the small crowd. They were very startled because she had a ladylike voice. They shifted their feet, glanced up and down the empty street looking out for danger, saw people in the distance and re-encouraged by the sight closed round her again.

"Where do you live?" asked the kneeling girl. "Let me take you home."

"Where do she live?" asked the carpenter.

"She says she's waiting for someone," said the girl.

"For Someone," Miss Baker subtly corrected. They were puzzled and abashed. Malign, she studied their feet to embarrass the people and when she put on the look of adding up their faces they turned away. But they did not go. The crowd had greatly increased. There was the inner ring composed of the young man, the carpenter, the kneeling girl and two or three others at the heart of the mystery. There was the second ring. There was a third ring which, between trying to reply to the outer ring and ask the second ring for information at the same time, got no satisfaction and could not get away either. The crowd stood there like oxen with all their weight. Their pipes smoked. Their breath steamed. Their eyes, like bright creeping things, she felt, wandered over her. "It's a girl," said the carpenter, swelling out in the chest. At last the outer ring forced a victory. "Here's a copper," cried a boy at the back and the circles opened to admit the weight of the policeman. They made way for him and closed in after him. He was a young policeman with very clean cheeks and all his weight went from one foot to the other. He was very heavy and calm, but he was blushing.

"Stand back," he said raising his voice, to give himself more space to be calm in. He put his hands on his knees and bent down to Miss Baker.

"Please, officer," she said. "Tell all these people to go away."

"Stand back," said the policeman again to cover his bewilderment.

"If you are all right you must move on, ma'am," he said uncertainly.

"You are obstructing, miss."

"I am not obstructing," said Miss Baker very sharply and tightening her long white gloves on her finger.

"Causing a crowd to collect . . ." said the policeman in his quoting voice. "Causing an obstruction. . . ."

"I am not obstructing. It is all these people who are obstructing. Please, officer," said Miss Baker with imperious lucidity, "please tell them to go away."

The policeman swallowed and stood up because his back was

uncomfortable and so was his reason. He advanced upon the crowd waving his arms. "Move along there," he said. "Move along now. Hear what I say?"

The ranks thinned out before him and as they did so Miss Baker very quickly, quietly and cleverly got up and walked away in the opposite direction, at first lightly shaking the looks of the gaping crowd off her back. She walked on twenty or thirty yards and one or two ran on to get ahead of her and some nervously followed to be within reach but without responsibility if something happened again. The rest had wavered backwards and forwards and the policeman stood in the middle of them, his head held together by his helmet strap. She walked on blindly straight. The heads of the crowd still seemed to her to be stretching after her like the shooting heads of serpents. She waved her umbrella to beat them off, but the miserable heads came on. She hurried to get out of reach. If she could only get a few yards ahead of them into solitude and into the charmed circle of prayer. If she could stop and hear the Voice. If only she could hear the Voice!

But now the invisible serpents had caught her and were in her head, filling it with their thoughts. She struggled bravely against them. And it was this struggle which filled her with towering rage. They were slaves. She was free. What right had the slaves of the serpent over the free? She trembled with rage. Defiantly sure of her right, she sat down on the pavement again.

She sat down and her spirit darkened with passionate affirmations of her freedom. It was her pavement as much as anyone else's. She had a right in law. Her cheeks flushed and she felt giddiness and darkness of blood in her head and the answering heat of defiance in her hands, her bosom and throat. She gathered all her forces into this narrow compass of personal assertion and defiance and magnified herself until there was no room for the Voice of God; and only the roar of the world was in her ears. She pushed back her white hat and her yellow hair began to fall over her face. She dug her nails into her umbrella. She was weeping passionately, and with shudders of hatred, abandoning herself to sin; beside her now was no healing pool. In the bars of the drain of the gutter beside her was the entrance into hell and the fingers of Anti-Christ were clawing at the bars. Down and down she was being dragged. It was with unspeakable gratitude she rose to go away with the policeman when he came again.

The following crowd stared at the empty door of the police station long after she had gone in. Generations of minutes bred and passed like ants. She seemed to be sitting on a bench in the police station and sometimes she was interested when a face with moving lips came nearer to her, but she could not think about the questions the lips asked her. She saw a man with a number on his collar, scratching his head, staring at his writing and two or three times he spoke into the telephone. It did seem that they wanted something that she could give, but when she gave them her handbag they returned it to her. The policeman with the clean face who had brought

her took her umbrella. When she got her handbag back she opened it and looked into her mirror.

"Oh, Miss Baker, you are a dear to come with me," she murmured, glancing slyly to see if anyone was watching her. "Where would I be without you! You and I in a police station, Miss Baker!"

She tidied her hair and before she had done this—which was very embarrassing—the man with the number on his collar put down his glasses and got down from his high desk. He walked across to her quietly and again began to ask her things. And at last it came to her very clearly that he wanted to know her name. Clearly as she heard the Voice speaking she heard another voice speak distinctly in her throat: "Legion," it answered. "L-E-G-I-O-N?" spelled the surprised officer. "And what address?"

But the other voice saw the trap and would not answer. Inside her it laughed like a flame.

They led her into an inner room and gave her some tea. She heard them telephoning again, far away the voices alighting in the places where the bells had rung, clapping down upon them quickly. Her mind drifted through parks and gardens and fountains which slowly quenched her inward flame. The room was peaceful and she could feel peace returning. And then, far away among the telephoning voices she heard a stirring in the air like the movement that came when the Voice was going to speak. She looked up quickly in this direction. And she saw a man in the room. There was peace in him she saw at once. He was huddled on a bench near her, his legs sprawling wide. His body lay in big, smiling curves of fatness. His sandy hair was sprinkled neatly and thinly over his head and in the gas light gleamed like a halo. But his features were ugly, brutal and sodden, his thick mouth had dropped open, many of his front teeth were chipped and he grunted half-asleep with the snort of a pig. His little blue eyes were half-blindly peeping. Once or twice he muttered and wagged his head and the policeman who was at the door of the room grinned.

She smiled and gazed at the man, not pushing herself out to him, but casting aside all aggression of the bodily will so that it was Sight that saw him and not herself. There poured out love and compassion for the man who was drowned in sleep. Out of him the Voice would speak. And in this knowledge she forgot about herself and her right, about drunkenness; and where the drunk man was, was a shape that would become the figure of God. The Voice was coming. Distantly like a high bird descending she could see the Voice; nearer and near it circled down, till as pure as a far-away bugle the sound came into her, saying to all her blood:

"Speak to me."

Speak to Him. She who had always listened *for* Him, now to speak *to* Him! She rose up with no hesitation and touched the drunk man on the shoulder and shook him. His eyes opened and quivered and closed again. She took him by his hand and his eyes opened very wide and stared. Then slowly he gave a long, creeping, dirty grin.

" 'This is Peniel,' she said, " the place of names. What is your name ? " she asked him earnestly.

He stared and his face sank deeper and deeper, more satiate into its folds of smile, and a sparkle of wetness came on the corner of his lower lip.

" Tell me your name," she begged.

He looked at her doubtfully and at last muttered thickly : " Shepherd."

Her face became radiant. Her neck was pale and her throat beseeching as she took his hand in both of hers and said rapturously :

" Then I am one of Your sheep ! "

" Here," muttered the drunk man, pulling her hand away and recoiling at the meaning in her eyes and lips. " You know shlot 'bout this shex stuff, donchyer."

And pushed her violently away. But she stood up and said aloud, laughing mildly in the duplicity of revelation her great sorrow had given her and holding out her arms in trembling white sleeves and raising her head :

" I have found my Lord ! Miss Baker, darling, we have found our Lord."



THE MAN MOURNS

Wood Engraving by BLAIR HUGHES-STANTON

*One of the illustrations to the Book of Jeremiah (Gregynog Press)
on exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery*

THE AMERICAN NOVEL TO-DAY

By HARRY THORNTON MOORE

AMERICAN literature has become more of a babel as the country has grown, and the political and financial upheavals of the last five years have intensified this confusion. It becomes increasingly more difficult to make literary surveys and predictions. In attempting to estimate the present condition of the American novel, perhaps the safest course is to choose and discuss certain books and tendencies and let whatever generalities may occur be for the most part implicit in this choice and discussion.

The mood for a great deal of recent fiction derives from Ernest Hemingway, whose influence has never been so fully acknowledged as it deserves. *A Farewell to Arms* appeared almost simultaneously with the crash of 1929, and was widely read in the days when gloom was first settling over the land. Here was a story of disaster told in terse American cadences; the compressed despair of the ending represented an attitude that was American in contrast with the plangent wailings of more richly emotional peoples. Even though the charge of affectation was not unconvincingly brought against the style, Hemingway's bluntness became the fashion, and to a great extent it has prevailed.

Hemingway has many imitators. Those who have copied his mannerism have wretchedly failed, for it is a mannerism that only its creator can breathe life into. But many of those who copied Hemingway's mood rather than his mannerism have been in some measure successful. Several of the younger writers have used the mood merely to express frustration, in true Hemingway tradition; others have turned it to more reformatory ends, in most cases with Marxist overtones. So we find Hemingway spawning several schools which contradict one another quite as much as they overlap. These schools may diversify greatly at the last, but it cannot be forgotten that they had their genesis in *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* and in the shorter pieces of *Men Without Women*.

At present the only admitted consolidation into a school is the proletarian, and even this group has its schisms. In 1934 there were more proletarian novels published than usual. The one which received the highest general praise was Albert Halper's third book, *The Foundry*. The setting of this story is an electrotpe foundry in Chicago, and the characters are the men who work there. *The Foundry* is a skilful bit of reportorial writing, but nothing more: the people are adroitly sketched, but they are static. This sort of writing is getting to be a fad in America—according to present standards, it is enough to surprise life in movement, photograph it and then pass on. Another proletarian novel which was acclaimed last year

was Robert Cantwell's *The Land of Plenty*, a brisk story of a strike in the Pacific North-West. Cantwell has more resources of technique and a more vivid power of writing than many of the older and more experienced members of the proletarian school, and *The Land of Plenty* is ripe with promise of a brilliant career. Despite the irony of the title, the book has a virtue it shares with Halper's—it avoids the over-effects resulting from partisanship. This cannot be said of *Those Who Perish*, the third novel of Edward Dahlberg, which was also published last year. Dahlberg's previous books, *Bottom Dogs* and *From Flushing to Calvary*, were direct pieces of realism with enough good observation to convey the feeling of life and at times even the beginnings of authentic characterization. *Those Who Perish* is lost in the maze of trying to capture a new literary technique; the story is vital only at those rare times when the author slips back into the idiom that is natural to him. The main part of the book stumbles through a hazy prose that is at once prophetic, reminiscent, partisan and symbolic; it is as disappointing as it is confusing. A novel of quite different calibre is Waldo Frank's *The Death and Birth of David Markand*, also issued last year. This novel could not be completely classed as proletarian literature, although it represents various phases of the proletarian point of view. *The Death and Birth of David Markand* is Waldo Frank's first novel in ten years, and a great improvement over his earlier manner; Frank has to a great extent freed himself from the febrile wordiness of his earlier manner, and his writing to-day reveals a rare skill and beauty. This latest story of one of his earlier characters, David Markand, takes place during the four years preceding America's entry into the war; in the course of the book Markand undergoes a range of experience few American characters in fiction have had. Above all the novel is remarkable for being one of the few serious attempts in the extroverted American civilization to tell the story of the inner life of a man of feeling. Now and then the author's idiosyncrasies intrude, as in the case of the man in *David Copperfield* who cannot keep the head of Charles I out of his Memorial, but taken in its larger aspects *The Death and Birth of David Markand* is one of the best recent books to come out of America.

The proletarians were first united on a large scale in the fall of 1930, after Michael Gold without warning opened a vicious fire on Thornton Wilder in the pages of *The New Republic*. Gold, an editor of *The New Masses* and author of a conspicuous proletarian novel, *Jews Without Money*, called Wilder the "prophet of the genteel Christ" and blasted him with ideas and terminology from Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, which Gold asserted had predicted Wilder many years before his actual appearance. Gold stated that Wilder turned away from the stench of present conditions and wrote antiseptic romances of remote places and people. For weeks the champions of both authors clashed in the correspondence section of *The New Republic* until the editors were compelled to withdraw their magazine from the line of fire. Gold's attack was so bitterly *ad hominem* that it lost a great amount of the force it might other-

wise have had. But there were half-truths in it, despite the fact that a writer has obligations for subject-matter only to his own fancy, and despite the fact that Thornton Wilder represented a disciplined talent of the kind rare in American letters. There were, however, just enough half-truths in Gold's argument to win over many critics and creative writers to the proletarian camp. It is interesting also to note that Thornton Wilder towards the end of 1931 published a volume of six plays, five of which were colloquially American and contemporary, although none of them dealt with social questions. And Wilder's latest novel is laid in the American hinterlands.

Heaven's My Destination is far removed from the classic themes of Thornton Wilder's previous novels—its hero is a travelling salesman of textbooks and idealism, an American "boob" with a smattering of quotations from great religious leaders. Although the book's geographical scope is limited, Thornton Wilder can hardly be classed among the regionalists, and it is doubtful that a talent as wide-ranging and versatile as his will ever be so classed. Meanwhile regionalism itself remains, next to proletarianism, the easiest school to categorize, although the newer regionalism is many-voiced. In poetry there has been a belated jingoistic discovery of the land by Paul Engle, whose book of poems, *American Song*, had a good sale last year; the poems are imitative and mediocre, and while several reviewers and part of the reading-public have been taken in, not everyone has been deceived. Happily Engle's influence has not affected the better authors of regional novels. William Faulkner, for one, will always be a bulwark against such easy optimism as *American Song* represents. Perhaps it is not quite accurate to call William Faulkner a regionalist, yet he persistently writes regionalistic books, although they have a power which raises them above the usual limitations of *Heimatkunst*. This power Faulkner has often misused or handled awkwardly, and it has been frequently misjudged. When not deliberately indulging in vagueness, Faulkner has an admirable strength of narrative. He has given several important depictions of the fellaheen Deep South, but these have been tensed and unrelieved: his characters are too inescapably oppressed by sadism and impotence. In 1929 Faulkner touched the edge of magnificent writing with *The Sound and the Fury*, but like so many American writers he has yielded to the demands for a speedy output, and he has failed either technically or spiritually to develop.

Another regionalist who is concerned with bitterness and frustration, though not so absorbedly as Faulkner, is Vardis Fisher, who has written several novels of Idaho. He is at present putting forth a tetralogy with the titles of the books taken from a passage of Meredith's. Because of its frankness several publishers turned down the first book of the series, *In Tragic Life*, but after a warm critical response following its printing by a small Western firm, the tetralogy has been taken up by one of the leading Eastern publishing houses (to whose officials Sinclair Lewis once said, "I like you—you're so God-damned commercial"). *In Tragic Life* is

the best of the three volumes which have so far appeared ; it is closer to the earth than the others, written in a harder, more expressive prose. It is the story of Vridar Hunter, a sensitive boy who shrinks from the brutality of life, especially from such phases of farm-work as the killing and mutilating of animals. *Passions Spin the Plot*, which came out last year, and *We Are Betrayed*, but recently off the press, take the hero through his college years in Salt Lake City and Chicago and his further experiences with Nelo Doole, a girl from his homeland whom he loves. Fisher writes clearly but often dully : the books are too strictly autobiographical and lack the selective faculty or its most trustworthy substitute, the kind of gift Dorothy Richardson brings to her writing that makes everyday phenomena into adventurous magic. There is genuine passion in some of Fisher's writing, and there is authentic tragedy, but all the trivialities he introduces are not well selected : there are too many of the small pranks and petty indignations of college-life among poor boys. It is poor chiaroscuro.

An utterly different type of regionalistic writer is Elizabeth Madox Roberts, whose novel *The Great Meadow*, which appeared in 1930, is a rich and vigorous story of the pioneers coming into Kentucky. Miss Roberts is one of the most accomplished living writers of English prose. It has been three years since her fourth novel, *A Buried Treasure*, came out ; it is cheering to know that her fifth is soon to be published. Another woman writer of regional novels, Ruth Suckow of Iowa, reached a peak last year with *The Folks*, an exhaustive study of a mid-Western family whose children pursue " typical " destinies from coast to coast. *The Folks* was an ambitious attempt, and in many respects it was well executed : but the book is far too long to hold the interest steadily, and novel writing is, or should be, something more than a tiring procession of small details that help explain how dull people drag through dull days. A more satisfactory regional novel by a woman making her first appearance in 1934 was *Now in November*, by Josephine Johnson, a forcible story of the drought in Missouri.

Another writer who, like Faulkner, it seems inappropriate to call a regionalist, is Thomas Wolfe. Yet the only novel from his pen that has appeared at this writing is *Look Homeward, Angel*, which despite its larger implications is laid almost totally in a small city of North Carolina. For sheer writing, Thomas Wolfe has more force than any American writer since Melville, but like most other Americans of to-day who have a touch of power—Faulkner, O'Neill, Jeffers—he is awkward and uneven. *Look Homeward, Angel* came out five years ago, and the sky is still ringing from the praises the knowing readers gave it : and to them Sinclair Lewis's statement in the Nobel Prize speech, in which he said that Wolfe " has a chance to be the greatest American writer of all time," did not seem extravagant. *Look Homeward, Angel* is perhaps the best illustration of the fusing of the freight-car realism of to-day with the enduring natural beauty. The portraits of the Gant family are sharp and hard, yet every little while the book breaks out into dithyrambic lushness that has almost every fault

writing can have and that at the same time is effective. Wolfe has taken nearly five years to complete his second novel, *Of Time and the River*, which will appear in the spring of 1935. After this book comes out it will be easier to place Wolfe; the shorter work he has been turning out for the magazines has been so alternately good and bad that the readers of his first book are awaiting the second with curiosity as well as eagerness. Meanwhile, another young writer of the greatest promise has come up, a writer who has even a more limited public than Wolfe's—John Steinbeck, the Californian. His *The Pastures of Heaven*, which was published in 1932, is a series of connected destinies in a valley near Monterey; the story is simple and strong, and reveals the author's ability to touch the depths of human conduct with economy of effort. In the following year he wrote a totally different kind of book, *To a God Unknown*, which contains some of the finest prose yet written in America. It is a powerful, earthy story, laid in Southern California shortly after the beginning of this century. *To a God Unknown* has an intensity that is partly reminiscent of the earlier phases of Lawrence and a hard strength that is partly reminiscent of *Growth of the Soil*, though it is in no way imitative inasmuch as the author has a style and a point of view that are distinctly his own; the comparison with the foreign authors was intended as a compliment, for Steinbeck's work reveals a depth and beauty not commonly found in the pages of American writers, and *To a God Unknown* gives promise of a career that will have to be measured ultimately by the careers of the great European and British authors of the day—Mann and Lawrence and Proust and Joyce—although Steinbeck's work will always have in it a flavour that is purely and only American.

It is strange that a country so starred with cities has not produced a more definite urban literature. There are city-novels and stories in profusion, but few of them crystallized into a technique. Indeed, city-writing has become divided into almost as many sects as the regional, if not more. Just before the beginning of the century, the brilliant and all-too-early-dead author of *The Pit* and *McTeague*, Frank Norris, said that there were only three authentic story-cities in the United States—New York, New Orleans and San Francisco. But in these days there are few stories of San Francisco and fewer of New Orleans, nor are there many of other cities scattered over the land. Now everything is New York, the publishing centre, although quite a few stories are laid in Chicago: *The Foundry*, for instance, and Ben Hecht's *Erik Dorn*. But New York leads even Chicago by a wide margin.

Some of the city-writing is clever and frothy, as in the work of Dorothy Parker and of Isabel Patterson, whose *The Golden Vanity* appeared last year. One of the cleverest of the city-books was Robert M. Coates's *Yesterday's Burdens*, which did not deserve the neglect it received after its publication last year. Coates used a modernistic technique, influenced by Joyce and the Dadaists, to portray a character named Henderson, as mythical as he was typical, whom the narrator met at different parties. A new writer,

Tess Slessinger, was welcomed for the breezy modernity of her first novel, *The Unpossessed*.

The opposite extreme of frothiness is some of the proletarian work which reveals the bottom dog's side of city life. Examples of this have already been mentioned in the discussion of the proletarian writers—the books of Dahlberg and Halper are representative types. A writer who celebrates another kind of bottom dog is James T. Farrell, who writes of the poor Irish on the South Side of Chicago, and writes of them idiomatically in the strongest terms. His first novel, *Young Lonigan*, was published three years ago with an introduction by Professor Thrasher the sociologist; the following year Farrell's second novel, *Gas House McGinnity*, told through the barrage of their own oaths the story of a group of workers in a Chicago express-office; and last year came *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan*, the second volume of a trilogy which will conclude with *The Death of Studs Lonigan*. Farrell has a sharp ear for the speech of the people and a gift of rough-and-ready narration, but his work lacks emphasis because of his inability to select and refine incidents, to raise them to the plane of fictional values. Another writer of the cities is John Dos Passos, who would probably wish to be listed among the proletarian writers, since his sympathies are in the main with that school. Yet he was not born to it; he is a Harvard man as Waldo Frank is a Yale man, and like Frank's his attitudes have come to him through experience. Ten years ago Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* attempted to give a complete picture of many sides of an American metropolis. The novel follows the fortunes of a number of characters on different levels for a quarter of a century; it has the nervous movement of a cinema and gives a fairly faithful representation of various phases of life in New York. It has far more sweep than depth. Dos Passos' later books, *42nd Parallel* and *1919*, display a growth in experience and technique, but no increase of depth. *1919* is laid in France during the war and after; it is a gripping story telling the further fortunes of the people who appeared in *Manhattan Transfer*. In both these books there is a motion-picture *montage* of events and people; Dos Passos' news-reel episodes relate him to Alfred Döblin, while his use of groups rather than a single hero makes him akin to Jules Romains. But Dos Passos is predominantly American in tone, and *Manhattan Transfer* remains the best city-novel America has yet produced.

Of the authors whose reputations were made before the beginning of this decade—Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Edith Wharton, Sherwood Anderson and F. Scott Fitzgerald—none of them has done anything significant lately. Theodore Dreiser, Edith Wharton and Sherwood Anderson are beyond creation; Dreiser has nothing left but the blundering style that made his novels almost impossible to read, though he will always have the gratitude of the writers of these years for his liberalizing influence; Edith Wharton has been writing reminiscences, and Sherwood Anderson has been running small-town newspapers—his latest novel, *Beyond Desire* (1932), his first in seven years, left much to be desired to account for the time spent since *Dark Laughter*. F. Scott Fitzgerald, who ten years ago

wrote *The Great Gatsby*, a novel about trivial people that was almost a great novel, last year published his first book since then—*Tender is the Night*. It was a disappointment, though in many respects it was a good novel. It was a ruthless study of expatriate Americans ; it traces the decline of some of the most glamorous members of that "jazz-age" which Fitzgerald made famous ; it is loosely written, but brilliant in spots. Fitzgerald is now engaged in writing a novel of the Middle Ages, but from samples of his work in that setting that have appeared in the magazines, not much hope can be held out for his work in this field ; but whether or not he can ever find another subject-matter that he can handle competently, he at least has a more positive achievement behind him than most writers of his time, in that he wrote one of the few books of the 1920's that can still stand on its feet. Of all these writers, Sinclair Lewis has in recent years been the most vigorously productive, and he has still a good writing-time ahead. His latest book, *Work of Art*, which came out in 1933, is the tender tale of an hotel-man who makes a virtue of keeping up small appearances. Here Lewis celebrates everything he once scorned. As a novelist he has always been overpraised, and the Nobel Prize committee's decision—whether or not it was a joke or a mistake—has thrown most recent American critical estimates out of proportion. Lewis is merely a popular author who rode one small formula to fame ; it was an obvious formula too, one that overtoned what was implicit or secondary in the works of other men, or in life itself. He shocked people, but his books sold because Caliban is interested in Caliban. Lewis's chief value is his photography, and even that is not always accurate. His writing is the poorest sort of journalese. His best book, *Arrowsmith*, not completely his own, has been for ten years the inspiration of sophomore students of bacteriology. It is a story of the temptations that beset doctors to be dishonest and publicize their work ; Lewis should have written a book about pandering authors which would have given American literature the lesson he gave budding bacteriologists.

For the great lack in American writing to-day is the lack of turning away from the temptation to be dishonest. Discipline and depth are lacking because of this, and perhaps this is why vision is missing too. The popular poet Robert Frost asks how the Russian novel can be written in America, how American writers can be expected to be Dostoievskys "as long as life goes so unterribly"—but Robert Frost is merely excusing his own apple-fed mediocrity. The American continent is and has been full of the richest material for writing, and there is no good reason why this century cannot cast up another Melville. The fight is not easy—the average American is still as antipathetic to anything artistic as he was when Oscar Wilde remarked at the time of his lecture-tour that when an American hears that a musician has been killed he immediately asks "Who shot him?" No, the fight is not easy : but whatever happens, the struggle is interesting to observe and to take part in, and if a few fight long enough and hard enough, they may yet be crowned with victory.

THE NORTH WIND DOTH BLOW

By EVAN COOMBES

THE boy had stayed home alone that he might watch the house across the fields, himself unwatched. Only when his mother and father had gone to town could he stare as he liked up the sloping ground to the small dark house that so aroused his wonder and defied it.

No matter where he looked, his eyes were drawn there, and no matter what he might be doing : working on the farm now that he had finished school, or standing idle on the back steps as he was standing this afternoon. He might look away over the November fields and pastures, strewn with rocks and bounded with them, as though the rocks had been swept into walls by some mysterious tide. He might follow with his eyes these low walls as they straggled down the hillside, past the orchard and down to the clustered roofs of the village, but he must come back as if magnetized. All these curving, undulating lines led to one place, were drawn together and brought up sharply in the small dark angles of the house.

There were no trees or bushes near it ; nothing grew there to soften its stark ugliness. Isolated, exposed, the house stood on bare ground, and neither man nor Nature had tried to deal with the unsightly structure in the usual way. Only the weather had given a suitable colouring to the unpainted boards, the colour of the fields themselves, especially rich and dark after the recent rain. The wind also had assisted in making it native ; the strong gales from the north actually giving a slant to the walls of the house and to the stakes that served as a crude trellis for a vine that bore no grapes.

The house held its interior secret. The small windows revealed nothing and the boy had never been inside. Since he had moved to this farm so many months ago, he had never even set foot across the wall that divided the two properties. He had only gazed from a distance, fascinated in some obscure way by the very bleakness of the place. Its exposure to the winds, to the greater heat in summer, to the snows of winter, aroused a longing in him to be up there on that high ground. Standing there, one could look far, and the whole countryside would roll away with its scattering of little homes, all like his own, painted white, vined over, nestled down comfortably under trees. None was so bare and ugly, none so exposed as this. Perhaps that was why he could not keep his eyes from the place ; why he kept watching it, and watching for the woman who lived there.

She seldom came outside, but when she did, she was as conspicuous as her house. Her hair was an unnatural red, having no part in Nature's reds ; her dress, a faded washed-out blue, strained over her rather large body as though she wore nothing under it. Sometimes she only came out to sit on

the steps ; sometimes to walk down to the village for fire, usually early in the morning when other women were busy in their kitchens. That was one of the things that made her so different from the women he knew : she was never busy. When she sat on the doorstep, it was wonderful how long she could sit there. She made him think of Old Man River in the song ; she didn't plant 'taters, she didn't do nothin'. She didn't even roll along, but just sat as if she were waiting ; like the sea, waiting for rivers to come to her. Busy people couldn't understand doing nothing, but the boy could. There was much of that in himself. He liked to stand still in the rows of bean-hills, leaning on his hoe, or lie on his back in the orchard watching the apples redden in the sun. If he could watch the woman sitting on her steps, so much the better. But how sharply his father would call him to his task, and in what a curious tone his mother would ask what he was staring at.

How reluctant his mother had been to leave him home alone that afternoon. She had stood there smoothing down the fingers of the brown kid gloves she always wore to town, but such was the reserve existing between the practical woman and the dreaming boy, she could only say :

"Cousin Mamie will think it mighty queer, your stayin' home like this. What'll I tell her ?"

"Tell her I'm going to supper at Lucy's. Anyway, she asked me."

"Why didn't you say so before ? Are you sure you're going ? Will you promise me, Jerry ?"

"Sure. Why not ?"

And yet she still stood there, smoothing down the fingers of her gloves, not looking at him, not saying the thing that was on her mind.

"Take a bunch of dahlias when you go. There's some of those big red ones left."

"I don't want to take them to Lucy. That would be silly."

"Well, take them to her mother then, and don't forget."

Even then she seemed dissatisfied, and as she climbed in the car, appealed to his father : didn't he think Jerry should come with them ? But his father was indifferent as long as work was not being neglected. Let the boy stay home. Let him go to Lucy's. The hired man was coming up to milk the cows, anyway. The boy staying home waited at the open door until the little car had scuttled out of sight down the road, until all sound of it had gone and there was nothing to be heard but the wind. He stood as if he were still being watched, hands thrust in pockets, head bent, while he kicked at the blistered paint on the doorsill. Funny thing about mothers, he thought, how much they know. She knew he was more likely to stay home than he was to go to see Lucy.

Why was she so keen about Lucy, anyway ? Always having her to supper and then he had to walk home with her. The girl would hold tightly to his arm as they went stumbling down the black road at night, sometimes shy and silent, sometimes chattering. He didn't know how it happened, but the last time they said good night, she reached up and kissed him. It was a queer little oblique meeting of lips, the touch of her mouth soft and

quick like nothing he had ever known. He had pondered long over this first kiss of woman. It meant that she liked him, he supposed.

He stood now listening to the wind in the trees, hearing it creak and sway the great branches, watching it delicately ruffle the white feathers of a hen pecking the ground beneath. He stood in the doorway between the warm kitchen and the sombre November scene. Dark enough the house looked now, set out pitilessly on the stony fields. One could imagine the stones had been thrown there, the house for a target. The place was so stripped that the wind found nothing to take with it, nothing even to tug at but the dry network of grape-vine and a tendril of smoke at the chimney corner. Inside those dark walls, the woman was sitting as idle as he was, no doubt, and waiting ; between them, only a field and a tumbling line of rocks. The thought of going to see her came to him as an extraordinary thought. And yet, he suddenly realized, that was what his mother feared he might do, and this startled him. As though her fear of his going there made it possible for him to do so, he considered it. If he had some gift to take her, but he had nothing she wanted. He did not even have anything to say to her. The thought of summoning her to the door while he stood tongue-tied, unable to open his mouth, confused him so that he was about to shut himself in the kitchen, when he was held motionless.

Something bright caught his eyes. The woman had come out of the dark house, and what was bright was her hair, the unnatural blaze of her hair. It was seized upon by the wind, tossed and whipped back like flame. The sweater she wore tightly buttoned across her full breast was also red, but a soft dull red, like that of old barns, tempered by the sun and rain into a lovelier tone than man could produce. She stayed at the door of her house like a figure on the prow of a ship, and the blowing clouds gave an illusion of motion so that the house seemed to be riding high on the slopes of the earth as on a sea. Then she detached herself, striding down over the fields, her thin blue skirt torn at by the wind ; and the boy watched her go through the orchard, watched her colours through the trees, until the last flickering of red had gone and there was nothing more of her to be seen. Sombreness reasserted itself ; the dark clouds pressed lower ; the fruit had been gathered. Earth grew cold, awaiting the frost, under a sky without memory or hope of sun.

Shivering, he went in and shut the door. He tried to warm himself at the stove but the fire was low. Restlessly, he moved about the little room, going to the window to stare down the empty road, turning back to the kitchen with its comfortable, familiar things trying to reassure him. He cut a wedge of apple pie, and eating it hungrily, looked at the clock. If he were going to see Lucy, he must go soon. He would have to take the road the woman had taken. Perhaps he would meet her on her way home, and meeting her so casually, he might be able to speak. At least, he could say good evening. He wished she knew that he did not share the prejudice of the village. It meant nothing to him, what they said about her.

And yet, it was not what they said, it was what they did not say. There

was a knowing conspiracy of silence, and the boy, too, not to appear unknowing, was silent. It seemed to him that her coming from town and not going back there, was the chief cause of their resentment. Morgan, the man who had built the house up on the hillside for all to see, who had made it ugly and left it ugly, used to interrupt his solitary life with trips to the nearest town. After several days of drunkenness, he would return to sobriety and toil ; but on his last trip he had brought back the woman with him, and had died a month later, leaving her his property. She had only been there through the summer, but even that was too long for the village. Why doesn't that woman of Morgan's go back where she came from ? This was the only question he ever heard asked about her. He heard it asked of his father down in the store and he heard his father ask it of the hired man ; and Charlie, oddly enough, for the boy had never seen him talking to the woman, seemed to know her plans. Charlie knew that she was trying to sell the property and was going back to town now the cold weather was coming. We'll have to buy it ourselves, his mother said, if that's the only way to get rid of her.

His mother was not home to watch him now, but everything in the kitchen watched him for her. It was useless to stare out of the window, his face close to the glass ; he could feel the room at his back. He must get away from it, out to shoulder the wind. Let it be cold and bitter, but no more of this shut-in place. He must get out in the strong wind which would be like a rude embrace, encompassing his body, a thing to struggle with, to throw himself against. He hurried to get away, pulling his sweater down from a hook, and as he did so, an apron of his mother's fell with it across his arm. For a moment, he stood looking at it curiously. The apron was so light he could not feel it on his arm, and yet it held him there. But why ? He was only going to see Lucy and he had not forgotten about the flowers. It is time to go, he said aloud, looking at the clock and carefully hanging the apron up ; it is time.

As he opened the back door, the wind engulfed him, plunged past him into the room. Slamming the door shut behind him, he ran down to the dahlia patch by the barn, putting on his sweater as he ran. He picked all that were left, five heavy red ones, drooping on their stems. Then he took to the wagon road that followed the wall down the hill. It was deeply rutted and pooled with rain, but the cold would soon be binding it over. He continued to run because he must, because it seemed to him nothing was still. The air was filled with leaves blowing and birds in difficult flight. He watched a small bird beating its wings, trying to make headway, only able to maintain its position in mid-air. The dark plummet of its body, the levity of its wings. The north wind doth blow, he remembered the child's verse, and we shall have snow, and what will poor robin do then ? But the robins had gone south long ago. Perhaps the verse meant the winds in March, snow coming then to send the robin to the barn to hide his head under his wing, poor thing ; the robin who had flown north too early thinking spring had come.

The road was still empty ; there was no one on the road as far as he could see down it. He stopped running and began to walk, and then to walk more and more slowly. After all, there was no hurry. He would be coming out on the main road too soon. But he could not walk slowly enough, and in order not to get where he was going, he had to sit down. On the top of the stone wall, he sat under an old apple tree strayed from the orchard. Its little useless apples littered the grass ; he had crushed them underfoot and the odour was rather sweet. Holding the dahlias, he sat there, the heavy blossoms drooping with their weight of redness. Mother sent these, he would be careful to say, handing them to Lucy's mother.

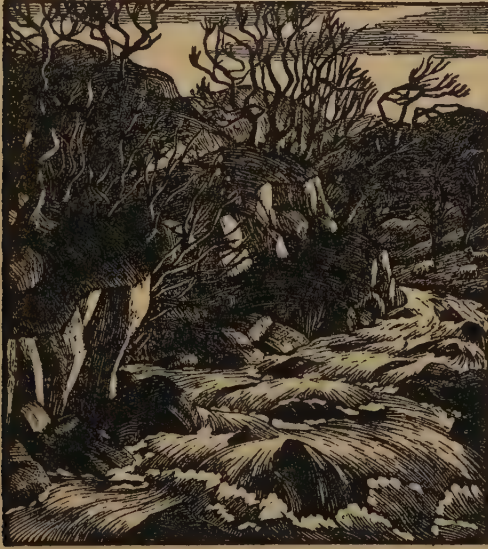
The stone wall climbed away from him up the hill ; it tumbled away from him down the hill. Looking up, he could see both houses from where he sat : the little white farmhouse and the dark house on barren ground. They were neighbours, set far apart, but only a badly-kept wall between. What made it seem like a barricade ? Idly, he swung one leg over, sitting astride the wall. His foot touched the alien soil and he felt as though he had trespassed, more than that, he had come nearer the woman herself. In touching the earth of her field, he seemed to have touched the hem of her dress. He caught his breath, and then, he could not breathe at all.

For she was coming toward him up the road. Her head was lowered, her eyes looking where she walked. She had not seen him, he knew, and for one tumultuous moment, he stayed there, watching her come nearer. He tried to think of what he should say, he gave one desperate look round, and in complete panic, dropped down on the other side of the wall. Face down, lengthwise, he lay close to the wall, as still as the stones themselves, as compact and as cold. His eyes shut, deep in the grass, he could only listen. But all he could hear was the roar of the wind above him and the pounding of his own heart within. He could not hear her step on the road, but he knew when she was near ; he sensed her nearness as she walked by. Closer and closer, he pressed his body to the hard earth and the harder stones, and even after she had gone by, he stayed there, prone, exhausted. He became aware of the odours of the wet earth, the crushed apples, and the dahlias he still held. He felt as if he had been there hours, when slowly, cautiously, he drew himself up.

Something had happened to the world. The clouds low in the west had parted and the sun shone, a violent, incredible sun. He had never seen so red a sun as the one burning between those heavy purple clouds. It brought him to his feet and he looked from the sun to the woman. She was far up the road now, starting to climb over the wall to reach her house. He knew that she might look back, but he could not move ; and when she did look back, still he could not move. They were standing far apart, but the wall no longer separated them. The ancient stones were running from where he stood to where she stood ; both were touching the wall and it was like a communication between them. After a moment, she climbed over and walked up to her house, the wind beating her garments against the strong

curves of her body until she was like a woman stripped, walking among the stones that looked as if they had been thrown there.

The wet earth of the field gave under his feet ; he stumbled awkwardly, his feet becoming heavy with earth. He kept his eyes on the woman as she waited in the doorway and then went inside, leaving the door open. At that moment, the sun caught on the windows and they blazed as if the rooms within were alight. He was mounting strange land, leaving his known world behind him. When he glanced down toward his own home, he scarcely recognized it. He was a long way from there, going at last into the house and its mystery. Dark enough it looked now, the nearer he came. The sun had left the windows, and he hesitated, almost repelled by the cold dark look of it. But he had the dahlias in his hand to give her, the door was open for him to enter, and he went in.



Dust Jacket by Gwen Raverat for "Loved River," by H. R. Jukes. (Faber & Faber. 7/6)

CORRESPONDENCE

THE NEW SCHOOLS OF POETRY

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY AND BOOKMAN)

SIR,—Dr. C. J. Kirk has been seeing things. In his letter published in your February number he explains that when “one thinks of the Sonnets, and then looks in your table of contents for the month and sees ‘Poetry . . . *Lilian Bowes Lyon* . . . *Stephen Spender*,’ one just laughs; but the laugh is the angry fierce laugh of the man who, having seen his *ATHENÆUM* captured by the Lloyd-Georgites,” etc., etc.

It must also be the laugh of one suffering from hallucinations, since I have never published a poem in *THE LONDON MERCURY*. So it is useless for me to offer to desist from publishing any more poems. You and I can hardly help Dr. Kirk if, whenever he opens his *LONDON MERCURY*, he laughs angrily as he sees my poems wildly printed across the pages. Perhaps the physician should undertake a course of self-help. That is to say, whenever he sees my name, he should try to imagine that it isn’t there. Then he will get over it.

Perhaps I should add that although I sometimes take the form of hallucinations, I do really exist. At least I think I do. If Dr. Kirk goes on like this, he will soon be giving me paranoia. Finally we will meet in a lunatic asylum, in which I imagine that I am Dr. Kirk, and poor Dr. Kirk imagines that he is Stephen Spender. In order to avoid this, we must both really be very careful in future. As it is, whenever I walk down Harley Street I laugh fiercely and angrily, seeing Dr. Kirk’s name on every door.

I may also say that I have never been to a public school, and that I belong to no political party. If Dr. Kirk retorts that neither would have me at any price, he is right, for it is perfectly true that they wouldn’t.

I feel sure that what he says about the inability of his young men to understand much modern poetry is true. Perhaps, though, he would adopt a more sympathetic attitude if he saw that the difficulties of the poet are not far removed from those of the reader, since poetry does not exist as something quite cut off from its audience. The justification of my own existence is that I am trying to achieve a clear poetry, whose interest is not merely personal, but is wide enough to be shared by an audience living in a very different, and perhaps a more valid and realistic, way than myself. Clearly, I have failed at present. But, like doctors, poets have to work patiently to achieve results, and there is certainly no other work that I care to do. It is so important, that the success or failure of one writer is comparatively unimportant, as long as finally the creation of a lucid and objective poetic style is achieved.

Yours, etc.,

STEPHEN SPENDER

February, 1935.

SIR,—I think Mr. C. J. Kirk has performed a notable and much-needed service in calling attention to the disproportionate amount of space allotted to certain young poets and “halfing philosophers” in your review. The poems in question seem to me not only deficient in rhythm, metre and meaning, but also lacking in a sense of humour. Have these young literary geniuses, whom we are called on to admire, ever read or heard of Hans Christian Andersen? I do not suppose they would stoop to such puerilities; but I do wish they would read, mark, learn and inwardly digest his tale of “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” If any additional force was required to support

Mr. Kirk's protest, it will be found on p. 399 of your February issue, wherein your reviewer praises in extravagant terms a poem that he quotes in full—"A Woman Knitting." I have read these rugged lines three or four times over but remain still wholly in the dark as to their intended meaning or application. A friend of mine, a scholar of European reputation, to whom I showed the poem, had to confess to the same complete failure to comprehend it as myself. To whom can these obscure and distorted exercises in our language appeal except to the tiny clique of "modern" poets who write them? We are left to accept the theory, *Omne incomprehensibile pro magnifico*, but I for one will not accept it.

I am, etc.,

HERBERT M. VAUGHAN

Tenby, February 13th, 1935.

SIR,—In his letter to THE LONDON MERCURY of February Mr. C. J. Kirk objects to the intrusion of political ideas in poetry and (quoting Mr. Michael Roberts in the January number) "to the older reader of poetry it is a matter for regret. His quiet world of inactive contemplation is invaded. . . ." This quotation anticipates and disarms any subsequent criticism. But why should poetry alone remain in static crystallization while other literary forms and other arts are allowed to develop according to the exigencies of their period? The Sonnet will save neither poetry nor civilization from oblivion. Those who have followed poetry all their lives surely must be aware of its many and inevitable fashions since Keats wrote his last lines, and our modern "half-fledged songsters" might retort that even Keats was pilloried by *Blackwood*, 1818, for writing "drivelling idiotcy."

Most poetry has been written for one class—the educated—because words are the poet's medium; but there must also be something of the poet's "make-up" in all appreciators of poetry. If young working-men of to-day cannot "make head or tail" of Spender, Auden and others of their own generation, who are to help them?—their fathers, or grandfathers?

Mr. Kirk is also angry at discovering in THE LONDON MERCURY poems by Mr. Spender . . . Miss Lilian Bowes Lyon. . . . Are they not as good as the puerile verse discovered in more "popular" magazines?

Yours faithfully,

JOHN E. WOODS

63, Mayfield Road, Earlsdon, Coventry.

MR. READ'S BOOK-MARKETING SCHEME

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY AND BOOKMAN)

SIR,—Mr. Herbert Read's book-marketing scheme proceeds upon the assumption that the British public is eager to buy books provided they are easily accessible and cheap. The British public is nothing of the sort. It is debauched by the opportunity of borrowing what it reads, instead of buying it. This is almost as true of *belles lettres* as of fiction. I don't believe Mr. Read's amateur-co-operative-authors'-book-association would last for three years. The rocky shore of the book-trade is littered with the wreckage of gallant adventurers who set out flying Mr. Read's flag, and cherishing his faith. I hate to be a sceptic; but there it is.

Yours, etc.,

ARTHUR WAUGH

NEW LITERATURE

AN ESSAYIST OF OUR TIME

By EDWIN MUIR

EXPERIENCE. By DESMOND MACCARTHY. Putnam. 7s. 6d.

THIS third volume of Mr. MacCarthy's collected essays is a fascinating one, partly because of the many good observations it contains, and partly because the outlines of Mr. MacCarthy's personality, or of the literary personality he has created for himself, his Elia, come through so clearly. No discursive essayist can get on without his Elia, for he has to be always in what he says, and once he is there he has to make himself convincing, give himself verisimilitude, and do a hundred other things which a novelist finds himself doing as he develops a fictitious character. The essayist need invent only one character, and sometimes it may have a close resemblance to himself: the closer the better, since finally it is the man and not the essayist who is writing. One feels that in Mr. MacCarthy's essays this correspondence is close and fairly continuous; there are touches now and then of the professional essayist's charm, certainly; but the main impression is of a very well-defined, solid, and almost obstinately natural character, who is prepared even to risk or invite the reader's disapproval on occasion.

I shall not try to analyse Mr. MacCarthy's character as an essayist, for it is clearly a complex one that cannot be done justice to in a short review; but I think that its two most salient qualities are curiosity and detachment. In a little note on pain he says: "It is a habit of mine to examine whatever happens to me and to squeeze a little information out of it, though why I do this I hardly know." There in a convenient form are Mr. MacCarthy's curiosity and detachment. One of the things that he says about his association with the *New Statesman* throws additional light upon them: "The *New Statesman* was out to improve the world, to correct the injustices of the social system, to stick up for the have-nots. I had, and have, the vaguest notions as to the best means of accomplishing these ends, but provided that I am not obliged to help myself, I like to be associated with others intent upon them." That is very typical of the character which Mr. MacCarthy assumes as an essayist; it is extraordinarily easygoing, but also shows considerable courage in proclaiming that it is so at a time when everybody is taking sides and a great many people believe that the world is on the verge of a collapse or an explosion. Such people might no doubt ask Mr. MacCarthy: "What reason can you give for being interested in those who correct the injustices of the social system without being interested in the injustices, and for associating with reformers while standing aloof from reform?" A perfectly good answer would be that a spectator sometimes sees things that are useful or interesting, and that a spectator must be interested and must be detached. Yet Mr. MacCarthy's curiosity has the limitation that he is never curious about his detachment, or rather about its basis. While interested in a hundred things, such as books, cats, trials, boxing, conviviality, pain, worry, he does not seem to be curious in the least about the reasons for this interest. He is content to say: "Why I do this I hardly know." That defines the boundaries of his character as an essayist. He never carries an enquiry to its conclusion; and his detachment marks the point where his interest

stops. But within these limitations he is unusually clear and just in his opinions, and that makes what he says continuously interesting.

Perhaps the best things in this book are the short essays at the end, some of them no longer than a paragraph. They are full of admirable observations: "Pain (I am not speaking of extreme pain) is the most *boring* thing in the world. . . . A self-delighting exuberance in animosity, a too obvious contentment in the sleek sarcastic phrase, actually bring balm to the wounds which deadly statements ought to inflict." About "No one loves Liberty who fears Licence" one does not feel so certain; surely it is possible to do both, just as a man may love danger and fear losing his life, or admire goodness while hating self-righteousness: there must be hundreds of such pairs. Mr. MacCarthy is much better in his concrete observations: "Of all sounds reputed sad, none equals the sound of far-off cheering . . . a sound which, though exciting and excited, carries to one who sits alone a sense of the transitoriness of emotion. . . . You cannot remember your sorrows while bathing or worry over your worries while playing chess." From this volume and the other volumes of Mr. MacCarthy's essays a very interesting anthology of aphorisms in the style of the French moralists could be made, for at his best he has like them the gift for saying things which are clear, concrete and illuminating without being final. The remarks which he appends to these aphorisms are generally interesting and amusing, but on a lower level, for his detachment prevents him from enquiring very exhaustively into their implications.

The straightforward descriptive essays in this volume, such as the account of the trial of Sir Roger Casement, are filled with unusually honest observation, but they are not so satisfactory as the more general ones. Here Mr. MacCarthy's detachment is sometimes disconcerting; it does not give his imagination a chance to enter into the scene he is describing. Perhaps that is because of his habit of examining whatever happens to him "to squeeze a little information out of it," an excellent habit in an essayist, but a disabling one in a writer who wants to give his imagination free play. He gives a very faithful description of his own feelings while he listened to Casement's trial and condemnation, but these are so complex in themselves, and so divided between sympathy and censure, that no very clear impression of Casement's ordeal comes through. Sometimes, however, this detachment is very effective, as in the author's impressions of August 4th, 1914, when everybody was feeling and nobody observing: "I had noticed in my late ramblings and strayings that 'good-nights' from passing strangers had been frequent, and that they had had a different ring. People seemed to like being stopped and asked for a match or to point out the way; their eyes were more alive, less preoccupied, more conscious of one. . . . In a road of modest villas (it was quiet and dark) I passed first one and then another waiting taxi . . . close on three o'clock, and in this region of prudent living!" Such cool observation of the first effects of a state of war is a far more real warning against the weaknesses within ourselves that make war easy than any amount of rhetorical description of horrors. That is how wars begin; we have almost forgotten it in remembering how they end.

THE PLAYS OF ERNST TOLLER

By R. A. SCOTT-JAMES

SEVEN PLAYS. By ERNST TOLLER. With a New Introduction by the Author. Lane. 8s. 6d.

"FOUR of these plays were written in prison," writes Herr Toller, "others were banned. And, finally, when a dictator came to power in Germany . . . they were one and all publicly burnt."

So it is in this country that the new collected edition of his plays appears in translations by different hands—two, *Transfiguration* and *Draw the Fires*, being published in English for the first time. There is also an eighth, written in conjunction with Hermann Kesten.

They were undoubtedly written for the stage. There are many purely sensational effects which the reader must miss—the whirr of machinery, the harsh rhythm of men moving to military orders, the dream spectacle of suspended skeletons, the succession of contrasting scenes, the sounds without, the startling exits and entrances. The stir, the clatter, the excitement, the grotesque decoration—much that has been devised by the author to make our flesh creep can only be reproduced in the mind by considerable imaginative effort when we read. On the other hand Herr Toller has imposed so severe a task upon the producer and the stage mechanics that we have perhaps a better chance of making a fair estimate when removed from the distracting equipment of his theatre. The tricks which "Expressionist" drama encourages disappear. The thought, or vision, stands out for what it is.

We shall find a marked difference between the earlier plays, such as *Transfiguration* and *Masses and Man*, written during or in the years immediately following the war, and later plays, such as *Hoppla*, in which we see a far more mature judgment, freed from hysteria, grappling with certain sinister problems of modern life. There is nothing like the earlier Toller in English literature. There could not be. It is born of the war, and also of defeat and revolution. English servicemen knew as much as the Germans of what was loathsome in war itself, but a great part of the community at home was blissfully ignorant and heroic. That part of the nation which lived in the fighting area abroad was one community; the larger part that lived at home was another. The men who returned from the war were inarticulate so far as war experience was concerned because there was no society, except that of other ex-servicemen, which understood their language. Hence there was no English war literature that came straight out of the war, and none at all till time had turned the realities into fantastic memories.

But in Germany the bitterness of the war feeling infected the whole nation. It was a starving, defeated country, passing through a social revolution. The earlier writings of Toller are the direct product of torture, an intensity of suffering which possibly increased some forms of sensibility but utterly destroyed the possibility of calm, disinterested judgment. A man writing as he could write would be addressing a Germany largely sympathetic. His work would be full of the abomination of war and of the social privileges which he believed to be the causes both of war and of the suffering of the poor; it would be full of sympathy with the masses, and longing for a social revolution which would give them their due.

But if Toller had merely been the proletarian voice shouting grievances he would not be the important man of letters that he is. Nor is he merely a propagandist with the literary skill to make his propaganda dramatic. Let us admit at once that his earlier

plays do suffer much from the fact that they are written straight out of his painful experience before that experience had passed through the lens of his imagination; an impression that is taken crudely out of life and expressed without adjustment to the rest of life is more likely to arouse protests than æsthetic acquiescence—there is so much that is not merely ugly, but also disjointed, chaotic, incredible, with the result that we may be temporarily horrified, but not moved, and we are left with no lasting conviction that what we have received has any correspondence with life itself.

Hoppla does give us such a conviction. So does *Hinkemann*, which is a straight tragedy concerning individuals, yet of terrific force and import. Yet even the earlier and artistically less successful plays are raised to a high level, not only by reason of their passion and their vividness, but also because Herr Toller makes an all-important distinction between two orders of the painful. The plays “bear witness,” he explains, “to human suffering, and to fine yet vain struggles to vanquish this suffering. For only unnecessary suffering can be vanquished, the suffering which arises out of the unreason of humanity, out of an inadequate social system.” But that, he recognizes, is not the really tragic element in pain. There remains “a residue of suffering, the lonely suffering imposed upon mankind by life and death. And only this residue is necessary and inevitable, is the tragic element of life and of life’s symbolism, art.”

So Man up against an unconquerable destiny is his theme throughout, though Man as represented by “the masses” is the victim for whom he demands sympathy. But his proletarian Man is no more perfect than his bourgeois Man. Herr Toller is ceaselessly trying to disentangle men and women and their individual selves and interests from the abstract mass. In many of the plays there is one symbolic individual whose human insight breaks through the cant which belongs to the typical characters. In *The Machine-Wreckers* we have Jimmy Cobbett; in *Transfiguration*, Friedrich; in *Masses and Man*, Sonia; in *Hoppla*, Karl Thomas. Each of these speaks with the voice of Toller himself, urging action, yet enjoining patience, protesting that “revenge is not the Revolution,” and that people come before the Cause. “If I took but one human life, I would betray the Masses,” says Sonia. The Masses themselves “are not holy.”

Force made the Masses,
Injustice of possession made the Masses.
The Masses are instinct, necessity,
Are credulous humility,
Revenge and cruelty,
The Masses are blind slaves
And holy aspiration.
The Masses are a trampled field,
A buried people.

It must be admitted that the picture of life which Toller draws is distorted by his concentration on the painful and the ugly and his denial of successful “goodness” (“Mankind gropes towards goodness”). But there is pity in his ironical account of the whole of humanity, as he sees it, struggling against a disregarding destiny and its own stupidity. “Hoppla! So this is life!” Not very nice stories, these, certainly not altogether true, if our bourgeois intelligence can estimate truth to life; but always powerful enough to be disturbing, and in two or three cases human enough and yet detached enough to become in the fullest sense of the term tragic.

REFLECTIONS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

By MICHAEL ROBERTS

THE LETTERS OF GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS TO ROBERT BRIDGES
AND TO RICHARD WATSON DIXON. Edited by CLAUDE COLLIER ABBOTT.
2 Vols. Oxford. 30s.

THE greatness of Hopkins depends not only on the accuracy of his writing, but also upon the intensity and scope of his thought and feeling. To say, as the editor of these volumes says, that "It is our good fortune that his name belongs to literature and not to hagiography," is to pander to the tendency to praise the manner and deprecate the content of his poems. The manner is certainly magnificent; its rhythms, its alliterations and assonances, its vivid, dynamic imagery in a continual play of light and shade, give the exact feeling appropriate to a certain range of thought: but if that which the poet has to say is not worth saying, then the manner is useless, the frippery and finery which Hopkins so despised.

When, in 1868 at the age of twenty-four, Hopkins became a Jesuit, he decided that poetry must take a minor place in his life. He felt the evil in the world, and in himself, as keenly as he felt the ugliness and error, and his moral perceptions reached a point of extraordinary acuteness and vividness at which they became almost indistinguishable from intellectual and æsthetic vision. In April, 1871, he writes to Bridges:

Horrible to say, in a manner I am a Communist. . . . It is a dreadful thing for the greatest and most necessary part of a very rich nation to live a hard life without dignity, knowledge, comforts, delights or hopes in the midst of plenty—which plenty they make. They profess that they do not care what they wreck and burn, the old civilization and order must be destroyed. This is a dreadful lookout but what has the old civilization done for them. . . . The more I look the more black and deservedly black the future looks, so I will write no more.

And again, ten years later, he writes to Canon Dixon:

My Liverpool and Glasgow experience laid upon my mind a conviction, a truly crushing conviction, of the misery of town life to the poor and more than to the poor, of the misery of the poor in general, of the degradation even of our race, of the hollowness of this century's civilization: it made even life a burden to me to have daily thrust upon me the things I saw.

And still later, in 1887, twelve months before his death, in a letter to Coventry Patmore (some of his letters to whom are to appear in a third volume), he condemns the "unmanly and enervating luxury" of Keats in comparison with Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and even Leigh Hunt who "right or wrong, still concerned themselves with great causes, as liberty and religion" (*Gerard Manley Hopkins*, by G. F. Lahey, p. 73).

Hopkins felt that his first duty in the world was to struggle against sloth, injustice, selfishness and all that Christianity condemns. Poetry was a doubtful weapon in the cause, and how right Hopkins was in rejecting Dixon's arguments in its favour, we realize when we find Hopkins praised as a poet by writers who ignore, or openly reject, his Christianity. Sometimes it is suggested that his later sonnets, because they might have been written by one who was not a professing Christian, arose from doubts about Christianity. Hopkins did not himself regard them in that way. "They came unbidden," it is true, and they express a perception of the need for action struggling against an incapacity to act, but that state of tension is a right state for a

Christian and perhaps for any honest man. Hopkins did not find, and did not hope to find, an anæsthetic or soporific in his Christianity, and his writing is important precisely because it shows, as clearly as Beethoven's later quartets, that intensity which Dixon, in a flash of insight, called the "terrible crystal," and the forces which produced that tension were the same as those which made him a Christian and a Jesuit.

Often problems of technique, especially the technicalities of rhythm, are discussed in these letters, but for Hopkins technique is always a means to a particular end. He will not tolerate even such a wealth of language as Tennyson's, if it is used to decorate second-hand opinions, not to embody thoughts actually experienced. He says of Crawley's *Venus and Psyche* :

It is not serious ; the scenes are scarcely realized ; the story treated as a theme for trying style on. There is not the slightest symbolism. This leads me to say that a kind of touchstone of the highest or most living art is seriousness ; not gravity, but the being in earnest with your subject—reality.

And he condemns as roundly the over-simplification of expression in some of Browning's poetry :

A way of talking (and making his people talk) with the air and spirit of a man bouncing up from table and saying he meant to stand no blasted nonsense. . . . A true humanity of spirit, neither mawkish on the one hand nor blustering on the other, is the most precious of all qualities in style, and this I prize in your poems, as I do in Bridges'.

He reads the Welsh poets, and (as some of us have long suspected) the poetry of William Barnes ("In which there is more true poetry than in Burns"), Piers Plowman ("I am reading that famous poem and am coming to the conclusion that it is not worth reading") and above all, Milton. He learns from them, and his technical observations are of the greatest value, but always matter and the faithful expression of matter remain the first considerations.

There have been in all history a few, a very few men, whom common repute, even where it did not trust them, has treated as having had something happen to them that does not happen to other men, as having *seen something*, whatever that really was . . . human nature in these men saw something, got a shock ; wavers in opinion, looking back, whether there was anything in it or no ; but is in a tremble ever since.

To these, Hopkins himself belongs : other men may have seen as much, but none has spoken as clearly. These letters, admirably edited, are good reading in themselves : they show us a great poet, an acute critic, and a Christian who could say :

The only just judge, the only just literary critic, is Christ, who prizes, is proud of, and admires, more than any man, more than the receiver himself can, the gifts of his own making.

Hopkins tried to understand the effects of language as it was used by his most careful contemporaries, and whether in prose or verse to use these possibilities so that he might say exactly what he meant, rather than some lesser thing. Therefore these two volumes contain better observations on poetry than any letters since Keats, and though they are seldom concerned with religious argument, they sometimes remind us of the intensity, humanity and almost terrifying humility of von Hügel,

HANDBOOK FOR PEACE-MAKERS

BY HENRY W. NEVINSON

PREFACE TO PEACE. By NORMAN ANGELL. Hamish Hamilton. 7s. 6d.

THE Patriarch Noah was inspired to foretell the Deluge, and he lived to see his prophecy fulfilled. He warned the people, but they gave him no heed, and he witnessed the universal ruin in which they were overwhelmed. In the same way, Sir Norman Angell by *The Great Illusion* warned the peoples what the certain effects of the coming war would be four years before it came. The book was translated into all written tongues. It was enormously read, over a million copies were sold. But the peoples gave it no heed, or they mistook its meaning. The Deluge of the war came. The effects followed as had been foretold, and Sir Norman has lived to witness them. So far as I can remember he and Noah are the only two prophets who have lived to see their prophecies literally fulfilled.

Taking their notions from the mistakes of those who mocked at his first book, people supposed that Sir Norman had foretold the end of all war because he had described war's inevitable consequences to victors as to vanquished. So when the Great War came they joined in the mockery due to false prophets. But he had not foretold the end of wars; he had foretold the inevitable disasters that must certainly ensue to both sides in the conflict. He had especially foretold the ruin of the victors, and the loss of the aims they had set before themselves or professed. The illusion of war had always foretold a natural profit to the conquering side. Everyone had assumed that the victors would of course gain wealth, territory, power and prestige, even if they had aimed at no higher ideal. Sir Norman maintained that all such gains were falacious and illusory. The deluge of the greatest war has swept over civilization, and if a monument of his foresight is wanted, look around.

In the present book he pursues his main theme, but more explicitly in regard to actual events and present situations. He fully recognizes that there are still many who extol war for its own sake. They may talk peace, as even Mussolini and Hitler sometimes will in their off moments. But their openly-expressed delight is in war, and in their ideal of a nation every boy is trained to arms as soon as he can walk, and every girl is made ready for war-service according to feminine capacity, even if it consists only in the service of bringing forth more boys as future food for guns. Of all the quotations which Sir Norman cites to illustrate the natural sentiments of these war-mongers the most atrocious in my opinion is the following extract from Major Yeats-Brown's *Dogs of War*. He enjoyed the war, he tells us:

My thoughts go back to those war years, and they do not summon up a vision of unpleasant things, though I had a taste of terror and discomfort. I think rather of cocktails in the R.F.C. mess near Bethune, short leaves to Blighty, night-clubs with knee-high skirted Wrafs and Waacs.

I knew Bethune on different occasions during the war. The first time I was quartered in a neighbouring neat and comfortable little French town, with habitable streets and a beautiful little town-hall and market-place; on later occasions that little town was a chaotic heap of bricks and rafters, in the midst of which stood a signpost inscribed with the words "This is Bailleul." But no doubt the destruction of a town did not matter provided it allowed Major Yeats-Brown to enjoy his cocktail there. And no doubt the deaths of nearly a million men and the tenfold increase of the nation's debt were a cheap price for us to pay for the officers' short leaves to Blighty, and their night-clubs with short-skirted girls paid to serve the country in uniform.

It is true that many who, like Major Yeats-Brown, have enjoyed the pomp and circumstance of cocktails and uniformed girls, have also maintained a belief in personal freedom, which is destroyed in war as certainly as towns. As Sir Norman says :

The war to make the world safe for democracy has been followed by a very epidemic of dictatorships throughout the world ; autocracies so amazing and so " totalitarian " that the government of the Kaiser which we held up as the ruthless enemy of all freedom and right now seems in comparison the very acme of liberalism. But that fact is not the strangest part. The strangest part is that many of us in Britain rejoice in the outcome ; that the self same popular newspapers which were the fiercest critics of the Kaiser for the illiberalism of his regime now declare the Hitlerite type of rule to be quite the best way of government and of life.

Sir Norman is not blind to the self-contradiction or double nature lurking in most of us. He takes the instance of a man who is the author of books on the beauty of war, and in one sentence will declare that the desire for peace is an evil and degenerate and anti-Christian thing, and in the next declare that we ought to increase our forces, because that is the only way we may make sure of peace.

We must find a new word in place of " Pacifist," which has acquired an ignominious use, but I know that in the hearts of many Pacifists like myself this double nature lurks. In Sir Norman's words, both courses cannot be right. If one road leads to peace, then the other leads to war. The whole issue boils down into a choice between the two. On the road for peace a man must encourage his Government to co-operate with other governments in building up, in all ways possible, perhaps gradually, but in any case steadily, a system of collective, co-operative defence as a substitute for the old method of defence by competitive power, of " each his own defender."

The book concludes with a list of the common objections continually raised against every hope of international agreement, with short and decisive answers to each, invaluable to anyone who has to face the heckling of warmongers on a platform. But, at the best, I admit that any sincere advocate of peace will have a hard struggle against the crowd who will not accept the miracle of peace because of their unbelief and the hardness of their hearts.

FROM SATYAGRAYA TO SAMYAVADA

THE INDIAN STRUGGLE, 1920-1934. By SUBHAS C. BOSE. Wishart. 12s. 6d.

ALL the world has heard of Satyagraha, Mr. Gandhi's weapon in his fight against authority in South Africa and India. Mr. Bose hopes that another word, Samyavada, which he has added to the dictionary of political terms, will become equally famous.

Samyavada is defined as the doctrine of synthesis or equality. The next phase in world-history will produce a synthesis between Communism and Fascism. It is suggested that this synthesis will be produced in India. The basis of Samyavada, we are told, will be those traits which are common to Communism and Fascism. These are the : supremacy of the State over the individual, the end of parliamentary democracy, party rule, the dictatorship of the party, the ruthless suppression of minorities, and a planned reconstruction of the country's industries in the interest of the masses.

Mr. Bose's book tells the story of the attempt of political India to force the pace of Indian constitutional advance between 1920 and 1934, from the point of view of a prominent leader of the Congress radical section, many members of which have

recently recognized the emerging importance of economic issues in India by forming themselves into the Congress Socialist Party. In addition to a narrative of events, it contains a criticism of Mr. Gandhi's shortcomings, as seen from the left-wing or activist standpoint, and it is this which constitutes the importance of the book.

Mr. Bose passed the Indian Civil Service examination in 1920, but when in that year the programme of progressive non-co-operation with Government was ordered, and patriots were called upon to resign posts held by them under Government, he threw up the service, and joined the non-co-operators. In July, 1921, he saw Mr. Gandhi. He found "a deplorable lack of clarity" in the Mahatma's plans. So early began the divergence of view between passivist and activist. Between the ardent activist, who believes that the future rests exclusively with "radical and militant forces," and the passive reformist whose special tactics made him, according to Miss Ellen Wilkinson and Mr. Bose, the "best policeman of the Englishman," there could be no fundamental unity.

Since that time the author has been in state custody many times, and in general has played his part in the making of Indian history. In his first chapter, however, he goes farther, and attempts its manufacture. Prior to the last thirty years, "it was customary for British historians to ignore the pre-British era of Indian history." Shades of Dow, Tod, Grant Duff, Elphinstone, Briggs, McCrindle, Keene and the rest of them! "Mahratta rule was based on benevolent despotism." Vincent Smith describes their independent governments, perhaps unkindly, as the "rule of professed robbers." "Throughout her history India has been able to absorb different races, and impose on them one common culture and tradition." Surely the fact is the precise opposite—there is as much variety at Delhi as at Geneva. Mr. Bose is entitled to his thesis, borrowed from Professor R. K. Mookerji, of the fundamental unity of India, for what it is worth. How far will it carry him in an age when economic relationships are likely to be the dominant factor in politics? As a topical instance, surely there is a fundamental unity between Perth and Canberra. Grant him, however, this fundamental unity. If it exists, then essentially the Indian States must be brought into the future United States of India. Why blame Britain for offering that "bitter pill" Federation, which in the circumstances, on the thesis of a fundamental unity, is inevitable? Why suggest that Federation was made to include the States, so that they might be a conservative element in the central Legislature? Should Britain have offered to conquer them first, and hand them over as democratically governed states to the new India? Constitution makers must work with the material they have. They cannot, like Mr. Bose, spin schemes devoid of contact with reality.

Could free and independent India remain United India? Mr. Bose's plan for achieving this is to subject it to the government of a strong party, bound together by military discipline, with dictatorial powers. This party will govern in the interest of the workers and peasants. It seems clear that "repression," which the late Mr. C. R. Das defined in 1924 as "the exercise by persons in authority of wide arbitrary or discretionary powers of constraint," and against which the political movement in India has so constantly protested, will be the ordinary method of government. If any considerable section of political India should follow Mr. Bose upon this uncharted sea, the main result might be a scuttle for safety to the friendly port of the new constitution. Safeguards mark out a possibly unduly constricted track through waters buoyed and known; Samyavada sets an ideological course through oceans, doubtless of blood, devoid of recognizable Indian land-points, and postulating as a preliminary a considerable outbreak of piracy in the political fleet.

E. FARLEY OATEN



DRAWING *by* DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO
(1449-1494)

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OLD ABANDONED HORSES

By Professor LIU HAI-SOU

*From the Exhibition of Modern Chinese Painting at the New
Burlington Galleries*

MR. AGATE'S EGO

EGO, the Autobiography of JAMES AGATE. Hamish Hamilton. 18s.

"I AM amused whenever a book of mine comes out and the reviewers start that old jabber about gusto." Very well, then, since Mr. Agate objects, let us call it zest, or a capacity for living with vigorous enjoyment; for whatever Mr. Agate may say about his nerves, his only too understandable boredom with the theatre, and the hideousness of his debts, it is quite plain that he revels in it all. He swigs his ichor from the bustle, the controversy, the being in the surge of things, whether in the theatre or in the pony ring; he undoubtedly relishes being a bit of a panjandrum in his way; and above all, perhaps, he profoundly savours the joys of friendship, the loyalties of affection. How, with all these things, should he not have debts?—since he must have feasts, friendships, ponies, motors and champagne. How should he not have nerves?—leading as he does what many would call a hectic life, sandwiched in between spells of remorselessly hard work, getting his paragraphs right, struggling for *le mot juste*.

A life without a little something to grumble at would no doubt be savourless, but sometimes those Mr. Agate indulges in are a little far-fetched. If he takes them seriously, he is asking too much of life. How should he expect the circles in which he moves so blithely to have that regard for Balzac which he professes? Yet it would seem impossible to convince him that there are some people of a younger generation than his who care more for Balzac than for internal combustion engines. And why should any but a very specialized set know about Malibran? Does he, for instance, know all he should about, say, Landor? or John Warde? He knows about Macready, of course; but does he know who Whymper was? I may be doing Mr. Agate an injustice, but a man may well be ignorant of these famous figures, and not be a tiresome "bright young thing."

Still, the grumbles do not occupy much of this ill-shaped but delightfully garrulous book, more than half of which is occupied by the diary which Mr. Agate began to keep in 1932. There are things in it for all tastes, and little that is boring; though there again one cannot be sure, for some readers may find Mr. Agate's golf scores entertaining. For my part I wish he had told us instead more about his ponies. The account of his early life is well done, and of his next phase as a calico merchant: the book then becomes scrappy, enlivened with anecdotes, variegated with letters. Then we get the War, in which he served behind the lines, his subsequent adventure as a shop-keeper which ended in bankruptcy, his apprenticeship to the *Manchester Guardian* at last leading him to his present gratifying station. Then follow his day-to-day doings, his flittings from house to house, his embarrassments over writs, his food, his theatres, his secretary, his encounters, and his and other people's wit. Is there a philosophy behind it all? Well, no, unless you assign to philosophy a remark that life is a jolly hurly-burly of a struggle, and the not very profound reflection that if there is no after-life, you will not be able to know that there is not one. For Mr. Agate is a man of the world without pretending to be anything else: gregarious, intelligent, quick-witted, generous, repaying good with kindness, and not bothering much about the evil men may do him.

There is one thing, however, that Mr. Agate does care deeply about, and adores, for a reason which has nothing to do with his immediate satisfactions; and that is, as it should be, the theatre, and dramatic criticism. Where these are concerned he is on the side of the angels, by which I mean the highbrows, the real highbrows, not the intolerable cretins he designates as such. For him the drama is an art, not primarily

an entertainment ; for him dramatic criticism is an exacting taskmaster who must never be offered the second-rate. Whether or not you agree with his standards is another matter ; but anyone who cares for the drama must welcome his championing of Ibsen and Tchekov, and groan with him at the way managers always spoil Shakespeare (because they think that Shakespeare without that little something extra which they alone can give would be excruciatingly dull). There are many things in this book to delight the sage reader among the multitude of things to rejoice the gossip, the collector of anecdotes (the scandal-monger is not catered for), the would-be intimate partaker of the lives of the distinguished. There is, for instance, his correspondence with Mr. Max Beerbohm over an anthology of dramatic criticism, which reveals Mr. Shaw trying, according to his custom, to tie impossible knots for the sake of a Fabian principle : or his correspondence with Mr. James Bridie over a criticism of *The Sleeping Clergyman*. It must be admitted that Mr. Agate's judgments on contemporary literature, or contemporary pictures, are sadly erratic : we wish he would give us some comments on recent music, for did he not at the age of seven compose a "masterly piano concerto" ? In short Mr. Agate comes out as devoted to his art, and outside that sphere genial and bluff, energetic and forgiving : feeling perhaps a little out of the world in which he moves, wishing he could have lived in the age of Malibran, Pauline Viardot, Rachel, Réjane, Sarah Bernhardt and Irving, whose photographs, a little unexpectedly, diversify these unromantic pages.

BONAMY DOBRÉE

MR. DAY

THE EXEMPLARY MR. DAY. A Philosopher in Search of the Life of Virtue and of a Paragon among Women. By SIR S. H. SCOTT. Faber and Faber. 8s. 6d.

ON its first appearance *Sandford and Merton* was not generally approved on account of what then seemed an impious disregard of hellfire on the part of the author, but it has survived to our time as a sample of arch priggishness and it will be an amusing revelation to many that it was actually written by an arch prig. Sir Samuel Scott has done a delightful piece of work in this biography, getting all the fun that is to be had decently out of his scarcely human hero, never by straining the evidence to the comic side. His excellent method has been to work from the reflections of the good Mr. Day, as caught from the actions and opinions of his friends, rather than from Day's own writings about himself. The latter might present him as an intolerable bore, but there must have been something more than priggishness in the man who could keep the friendship of the lively, swaggering Richard Edgeworth (father of the famous Maria) and always be welcomed eagerly in the elegant circle of the sprightly Anna Seward, "Swan" of Lichfield, even when he would not powder his hair or dress "like a gentleman."

Those were great days for a man of strong character who happened to be born, as Day was, with a silver spoon in his mouth. Wistfully, we might ask if such freedom will ever occur again ? Day wished to devote himself to the good of humanity and the pursuit of virtue and nobody hustled him into a profession or enchained him in this or that track of organized social service. As a schoolboy he saved his pocket-money and gave it to the poor—a difficult feat for a schoolboy of to-day even if he were a good boxer, as Day was. He left Oxford without taking a degree and by twenty-

one was wandering about the West Country in search of some young female he could train up into the perfect wife. It was possible for him to extract two girls of twelve from separate orphanages—they were both very pretty little girls, for Day, as Sir Samuel says, “ though seeking purely moral and intellectual perfection had a way of discovering it in an attractive disguise ”—and to take these potential paragons off to France without chaperon.

The retreat to France was made so that the little girls, who were to be allowed to learn no French, could not be contaminated by ideas other than Day's own, but it did not work well. After eight months, during which he had himself to nurse the children through smallpox, challenge a French officer who talked to them, and save them from drowning in the Rhone when they upset a boat during a quarrel, he brought them back. Already he had decided that one had not the makings of a paragon in her and apprenticed her to a milliner. The education of the other went solemnly on, but eventually Day was convinced that though charming and affectionate, Sabrina, too, would be no paragon. In vain he tried to make her courageous and indifferent to pain, by firing a pistol at her petticoats and dropping hot sealing wax on her arms, to teach her to renounce vanity by putting her new dresses and bonnets on the fire. Sabrina cried—and escaped being Mrs. Day. But, after all, why should not an age which produced Day have produced a female to match ? This, in fact, it did, in the person of Miss Esther Milne. She had a large fortune which Day refused to take on their marriage.

Meekly she went with him to the rural solitude he believed essential to the pure life, never seeing even her own parents again. She cooked and scrubbed and abandoned the music she loved because Day believed in simple household ways, though there is no evidence that he took to manual labour himself. When he died she was inconsolable, for a long time could not bear the daylight, and died three years later, as the *Gentleman's Magazine* had it, “ a victim to conjugal affection.”

EDITH SHACKLETON.

TOLSTOY'S DAUGHTER

I WORKED FOR THE SOVIET. By COUNTESS ALEXANDRA TOLSTOY. Allen and Unwin. 10s. 6d.

COUNTESS ALEXANDRA TOLSTOY, the author of an excellent book about her father, is a writer of exceptional ability—she is exceptional in her character, vitality and powers of selection and description. The account she now gives of her life in post-revolutionary Russia can accordingly be enjoyed for its own sake. At the same time, it is scarcely possible to read it without thinking of politics. Political extremists will probably welcome it with delight—if they are Diehards, as a confirmation of their worst suspicions, or if they are Communists, as a perfect example of liberal and bourgeois futility. But the ordinary English reader, who is as likely as not a bourgeois with liberal inclinations, will attend to it with sympathy. He may suppose that certain of the Communist ideals are valuable and that in Russia a revolution was inevitable, but this book will remind him forcibly that ideals are not easy to put into practice, and that the suffering and injustice consequent on the Revolution were not slight : he will be bound to admire the courage, humour, patience, and enterprise of the author,

whose predicament will seem to him on the whole that of a civilized person among barbarians.

The point of her story is that she wished to uphold the principles of her father—his belief in non-resistance and pacifism, and his abhorrence of terrorism, the exploitation of the poor, imprisonment, exile, and capital punishment—and that she herself had been looking forward for many years to a more liberal government, "one without militarism, and with religious and political freedom, and with land for the peasants." After the Revolution she devoted herself to putting her father's writings in order in preparation for a complete edition, and this task kept several people busy for several years. In all her incidental descriptions she conveys what few books convey—few, especially, of the books about Soviet Russia—a sense of life. Even when attempts are being made to build a new world, life is largely made up of odd and trifling interludes. Here is a little scene in November, 1919:

The trees were rustling in the old park, the big-bellied samovar puffed and boiled on the tea table. We were scarcely astonished when I turned up the seven of spades. A shudder ran down my back.

The Countess was in due course arrested by agents of the Cheka, one of them a languid young man with long curly hair and a velvet blouse, who explained, "I am an artist, a futurist." Her crime was that she had inadvertently served tea to some plotters against the government, which cost her a sojourn in prison followed by three years in a prison camp. In both places her life had that peculiarly Russian blend of horror and poetry, was often as logical as *Alice in Wonderland* and sometimes as macabre as a *surréaliste* nightmare. In the prison, a man sentenced to death, a "great artist," plays Chopin's Funeral March exquisitely on his last day, the Countess spends a night alone in a dark cell full of rats which swarm over her, while in another cell she receives presents of flowers and twines them on the bars; in the prison camp (the former Novospasky monastery) there are extraordinary nocturnal scenes of graves being rifled, and there is George, a highly engaging lady horse-thief and can-can dancer.

Eventually the author returned to try and carry on the Tolstoyan tradition at Yasnaya Polyana, but she was thwarted, and in 1929 left Russia for good. "Just like the old régime," was her reflection on Kalinin, "deceiving himself and others"; and a member of the Komsomol said to her, "We've done away with the bourgeoisie and given birth to a new bourgeoisie and bureaucracy." Though it is obviously and naturally biased, this book may serve to remind some of our parlour Communists that there is still a despot in the Kremlin, and some reason for supposing that Russia is still Russia. Whether it does so or not, it is an honest book and a remarkably interesting one.

WILLIAM PLOMER

A PLEA FOR PHILOSOPHY

RETURN TO PHILOSOPHY. By C. E. M. JOAD. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.

THE title page describes this book as "a defence of reason, an affirmation of values, and a plea for philosophy." To-day, when the tide is apparently in full swing toward irrationalism and subjectivity, few undertakings could be more unfashionable, more delicate, or more urgent. To be at all effective such a task must be carried out in a manner that is not only trenchant but lucid and entertaining. In this book, whether Mr. Joad is deploring the post-prandially-submitted and pseudo-philosophical typescripts of successful business men, or dissecting the nonsense of Mrs. Eddy, or condemning "the snobbery of anti-culture," or with due seriousness criticizing Aldous Huxley and D. H. Lawrence, or expounding his own theories, or merely describing his way of life, he is always lucid and entertaining, often trenchant.

The criticism of Aldous Huxley is effective. By means of philosophical reasoning, says Mr. Joad, Huxley reaches the conclusion that all philosophical reasoning is determined by subjective need, and therefore cannot give us the truth about reality. Science, on the other hand, is said to be controlled by facts, and therefore valid. Mr. Joad replies that, if the argument against reason is sound, science itself is invalidated, since it is dependent as much on reason as on observation. But, he says, all attempts to undermine reason by means of reason stultify themselves. To think is to recognize some sort of objective difference between true and false thinking, and to allow that in principle objective truth is discoverable, however grievously the enterprise may be confused by subjective influences.

With regard to Huxley's theory of the subjectivity of values, Mr. Joad points out that it comes strangely from an indefatigable moralist. By implication, if not explicitly, Huxley regards "life" as intrinsically good. All vital impulses, however, are in his view equally worthy, and all should have free expression. Even so, says Mr. Joad, the goal is to be attained not by fulfilling every impulse as it occurs but by arbitrating rationally between many permanent and conflicting claims, so as to secure the greatest possible expression for all impulses in the long run. But, he insists, what is good is *not* simply "life." This Huxley himself, in spite of his theories, must know; for he praises the highbrow activities at the expense of the lowbrow.

Mr. Joad's whole philosophy is based on the distinction between the higher and lower planes of mental activity. The ethical superiority of the higher, he says, is simply intuited, and calls for no rational defence. The *kind* of activity which is thus intuited as superior is that which apprehends objective reality more comprehensively and penetratingly. Reason, says Mr. Joad, has as its chief office the integrating of experience in preparation for an intuitive leap to apprehension of reality on a higher plane. All this is excellent. So is the account of the functions of philosophy and art in terms of this theory.

Two criticisms, however, must be suggested, though there is no space to substantiate them. The first is that Mr. Joad's uncompromising dualism leads him to disparage matter and to spoil his timely defence of the objectivity of values by reducing Truth, Beauty and Goodness in the last resort to mere abstractions.

The second point is that his judgment on our age would have been even more effective if it had been less sweeping. Take Lawrence, for instance. He was, indeed, no thinker; but he was an artist. Though his cult of "the divine abdomen" is "inverted sentimentality," it springs from a positive and significant experience of value. His "dark god" appeared to Lawrence and to his followers in an authentic revelation,

though in one which both prophet and disciples have extravagantly misinterpreted. What is needed is not simply to abolish that divinity but tactfully to put him in his place. And with regard to the whole modern cult of the subconscious, the primitive, the negroid, let us indeed be ruthlessly critical of its extravagance and irrationalism, but let us keep sensitive to that positive experience which lies at the core of it. Somehow we must avoid throwing away the pearl with the pig-wash.

OLAF STAPLEDON

BETWEEN DEATH AND LIFE

THE ETERNAL SMILE. By PÄR LAGERKVIST. Translated by DENYS W. HARDING and ERIK MESTERTON. Gordon Fraser. 5s.

THE Scandinavian genius has a certain independence of the rest of the European cultures. Everything which comes out of these beautiful northern countries—Ibsen, Strindberg, Greta Garbo, even the melancholy mania of Ivar Kreuger—bears the same solitary, glacial stamp. "One can have nostalgia for countries one has never seen," the Garbo says in one of her films, and Stockholm is full of nostalgic reminiscences of France, Greece and Spain. Hers is an Hellenic race which by the hazards of migration has found itself living among the Hyperboreans. The naturally active, creative Swedish character is compelled by the long, ice-bound Baltic winters to withdraw into the desolate places of contemplation. Hence the recurrent interest for the Swedish intellect of the contrast between living and dead, regarded as parallel and simultaneous states. This preoccupation, natural to Slavic temperament, and obsessing Teutonic genius to the point of suicide, is induced in the more frivolous and active Swedish intelligence by the pure compulsion of climate.

In this fantasy of the dead, one is made to feel the presence of millions of souls: a concourse as innumerable as that of the endless pine-forests of Northern Sweden. And yet all the characters in this book strike one as being Swedes. The dead men who sit and talk endlessly about their lives are those who within or near the Arctic circle sit up all night talking and drinking Schnapps. Night there is a long twilight. Waking and sleeping states are merged; and life and death easily enough become confused. *The Eternal Smile* professes to be a story about the dead; but equally it is a story about the living, in that half-state between death and life which is characteristic of the northern meditative mood. For such a mood, life seems merely to be waiting for death; and death is to usher in another endless period of waiting, apparently for nothing.

Freud has said that the fear of death is in reality a concealed fear of life. The author of *The Eternal Smile* is continually telling himself and his readers to escape from this fear, and accept life. To a neurotic temperament the effect of the book might well be the reverse, and one can only say that the writer makes his nightmare so convincing that his final moralistic advice fails to dissolve it. These meditations on life and death obviously leave room for all the devils of mediocrity to rush in. They are all too familiar properties in the welter of suburban "philosophy." Homer or Tolstoy can speak on matters like these with impunity; of Pär Lagerkvist one can justly say that the style and spirit of his fantasy are those of a man who is aware of difficulties. He has been brilliantly translated. The English outsider will probably get much pleasure from this vista of the shadowy world within whose remote depths is God, an old man ceaselessly sawing wood.

CHARLES MADGE

LORENZO AND FRIEDA

NOT I, BUT THE WIND. Memoirs of her Husband. By FRIEDA LAWRENCE.
Heinemann. 10s. 6d.

IT is to be hoped that this book will stop the output of backstairs gossip about Lawrence. The story unfolded is already familiar ; Mrs. Lawrence can do no more than re-tell it from a different point of view. But since the point of view is that of a protagonist in what really *was* a drama, the narrative deserves a respectful hearing ; the more so since it has a reserve wanting in most books about Lawrence. The person best qualified to speak on the intimacies of his life is, rightly, reticent. And she bothers neither to defend herself nor to attack those who have attacked her.

Reticence may seem a strange word to apply to a book so unconstricted in manner as this. But despite its undisciplined writing, despite its Teutonic gush, reticent in vital matters the book is. Mrs. Lawrence begins with her first meeting with Lawrence in 1912 and their almost immediate departure together for Germany ; she ends with his burial at Vence. The vicissitudes of the intervening eighteen years she treats with pleasing recklessness ; of the death she writes movingly. The style throughout is superficially Lawrentian, with embedded fragments of Lawrence doctrine : " I think a man is born twice : first his mother bears him, then he has to be re-born from the woman he loves." " There was the ordinary man-and-woman fight between us, to keep the balance, not to trespass, not to topple over." This said, there seems little to add ; the memoir is not, and does not pretend to be, a serious contribution to the study of his work.

New light on Lawrence, however, there is in the book. Mrs. Lawrence is able to print about ninety hitherto unpublished letters : the majority to her mother, some to her sister, and a few to herself. These few are vital to the story of Lawrence's marriage. And understanding of that story is vital for a full study of his genius. For many men marriage might be a turning-point ; for Lawrence it was the crisis of his life ; and his action at this crisis was to influence all his subsequent writing. He at once recognized it as a crisis, and in these letters, written during the first weeks in Germany, when he and his future wife had decided that she should seek a divorce, but were still living apart, we see him insisting on the profound, the truly moral seriousness of their action :

Can't you feel how certainly I love you and how certainly we shall be married ? Only let us wait just a short time to get strong again. Two shaken, rather sick people together would be a bad start. A little waiting, let us have, because I love you. Or does the waiting make you worse ?—no, not when it is only a time of preparation. Do you know, like the old knights, I seem to want a certain time to prepare myself—a sort of vigil with myself. Because it is a great thing for me to marry you, not a quick, passionate coming together. I know in my heart " here's my marriage." It feels rather terrible—because it is a great thing in my life—it is *my life*—I am a bit awe-inspired—I want to get used to it.

A decisive episode is thus shown from an entirely fresh angle ; the publication of these letters alone would justify Mrs. Lawrence's book. And there is other interesting new material. In the letters to his mother-in-law Lawrence shows an unsuspected readiness to adapt himself to the tastes and interests of his correspondent ; this group has a singularly engaging gentleness and warmth. Also included are a number of poems in their original form ; most were later included in *Look ! We Have Come Through !* But the letters to Mrs. Lawrence give the crux of the story.

DILYS POWELL

MORE LETTERS OF JONATHAN SWIFT

THE LETTERS OF JONATHAN SWIFT TO CHARLES FORD. Edited by DAVID NICHOL SMITH. Clarendon Press. 15s.

THIS is a book of the greatest literary importance. It is not often that a body of upwards of fifty letters from as famous a person as Swift lies unpublished for two hundred years. That, however, is what has happened here, and we are now given for the first time the correspondence, extending over the years 1708 to 1737, of Swift with his intimate friend Charles Ford. Of the sixty-nine letters here printed that passed between the friends, the eighteen written by Ford were printed by Swift's editors in the eighteenth century: the fifty-one written by Swift were preserved, unpublished, in the family of Ford's executor till 1896, when ten were sold by auction. These ten, by permission of their present owners, are here printed with the rest of the fifty-one together with Ford's side of the correspondence, and with letters to Ford from Gay, Pope, Parnell, and Bolingbroke, and poems by Swift and Ford from among Ford's papers. These last are some of them in Swift's own handwriting, some of them in Ford's, and though they do not include any new pieces by Swift, the versions they provide are of considerable textual importance.

The chance that has preserved this collection in the main unpublished till to-day is in many ways a fortunate one. For it has meant that Swift's letters are first given to the world in a volume such as we have learned to expect from the Clarendon Press, beautiful and workmanlike from title-page to index, and that their editor has no previous false versions to correct, no need for a textual apparatus, no antiquated editorial brushwood to clear away.

The editor is Professor Nichol Smith. It is not surprising, therefore, that the work is done as well as it possibly could be. In his introduction, concise and full, Professor Nichol Smith sets out the facts of Ford's life and the circumstances in which the letters were written (thus providing a very valuable side-light on Swift's character and career); in his notes, he elucidates the topical references in which they abound.

"No letter of all the fifty-one," says Professor Nichol Smith, "seems quite to stand out as a great letter." But, as he observes, the letters show us Swift in undress, and they tell us much that it is interesting to know. For Ford was a person who filled a not unimportant part in Swift's life, and he was an intimate member of the literary circle that surrounded Bolingbroke. He was the Tory editor of *The London Gazette* in the two important years that preceded the Queen's death, and during the crucial months of July and August, 1714, when Swift was in retirement in the country, he kept Swift supplied with London news, and seems to have acted as an intermediary between him and Bolingbroke. "You are more constant than all my correspondents together," said Swift; and all Ford's eleven letters of July and August, 1714 (which were so full of information that Swift kept them as a "memoir" for the history of that time, which he intended to write) are here fully annotated, together with Swift's answers.

Together with this group of 1714 letters easily the most important are those belonging to the years 1721 to 1726. These show that Ford alone among Swift's friends was in the secret of the writing of *Gulliver*, that he saw and criticized the book in MS., and that he was the channel by which Swift conveyed it to the printer. They conclusively disprove the theory, till now widely accepted, that *Gulliver* was finished by 1721, and was kept by Swift, complete but unpublished, for five whole years. Later

letters confirm that the text of 1735 is that on which Swift set the final seal of his approval.

The letters are full of touches which reveal Swift's moods and make them easy and amusing to read, but their real importance lies in the new facts, adumbrated above, which are now put at the disposal of his biographers.

JOHN SPARROW

THE SAD BROTHER

THE POETICAL WORKS OF DOWSON. Edited, with an Introduction by DESMOND FLOWER. Cassell and The Bodley Head. 10s. 6d.

IT is very encouraging to see two publishers' imprints on a title page, especially when the book is so beautifully printed and made as this one. Here is real co-operation, with impressive results! Mr. Desmond Flower has obviously worked on a labour of love, for he has taken infinite pains with the text, and his notes are a model of careful scholarship. In his Introduction he makes a startling comparison between the Elizabethan Age and the Naughty Nineties, finding both alike in their "tale of woe," and in the early death of the majority of their poets. It sets one thinking, and I don't think that I agree altogether. The sadness of the Elizabethans was different from that of the Yellow Book Mortuaricians, and it might be misleading to presume a likeness.

Mr. Flower, however, says all that there is to be said about Dowson, that pathetic figure whom we see, perhaps, a little too often as the "greenery-gallery" portrait painted by Arthur Symonds. There was more vitality than that in Dowson, as we may discover from the rhythm of his verse. Mr. Flower is very interesting on this matter, and throws much light on technical details, such as the experiment with Alexandrines in the most famous of Dowson's poems, *Cynara*. This is surely the only way to find the permanent quality of the man. It shows him to be an original artist, at least in English verse. His progress, his *gait*, has always reminded me of that of Verlaine, and it might not be an exaggeration to call him the English Verlaine; or at any rate it is less misleading and more just to Dowson to look in that direction rather than toward Swinburne, whom he sometimes more obviously and superficially followed. But he lacks Verlaine's variety and subtlety, both of thought and music. There could not be a more just summing up of his quality than this by Mr. Flower. "It has been stated often enough that Dowson had but few strings to his poetic bow, and it would be idle to deny this. His ill success in love, the unalterable progress from childhood to womanhood of each unsophisticated creature on whom he set his affections, his disgust with life and mankind when one of these charming children lived up to his worst fears and gradually became sex-conscious and gauche, autumn and the winter of death as the only rest from this *lachelé*: these, with a few exceptions which are the more notable for their paucity, sufficed him. But from this limited instrument he wrung every note of which its small compass was capable."

Add to this the strong pre-Raphaelite flavour of his verse, with its cloying archaisms and its Rossetti-like stuffiness, all arrested by a sort of poetic puberty and set in an amber of nostalgia. He leaves one finally with a sense of having been cheated of a conclusion to the music of his rhymes. They run out thinly, and one turns hungrily to contemporaries such as Yeats and Bridges, who, as we now know, survived and developed into major singers.

RICHARD CHURCH

COMPARATIVE CRITICISM

MINUET : A Critical Survey of French and English Ideas in the Eighteenth Century. By F. C. GREEN. Dent. 15s.

WITH a confessed bee in his bonnet, the present reviewer would have preferred to be confronted at the outset of this important series of studies with the remarks which have been modestly relegated to its close. They offer the author's "apology" in terms of reasonable protest against the excesses and assumptions of *comparatiste* and "scientific" method in modern literary scholarship. Professor Green's discreet but opportune remonstrances are based not on a rival theory, but on a re-examination of definite literary facts occurring in roughly parallel sequences on both sides of the Channel in the eighteenth century. Each fact is envisaged in the first place as an entity to be appreciated whole, not as a fragment or fibre detached from an otherwise neglected ensemble. But this notice should not reverse his example and ignore the point suggested by the title : the scholarship with which his pages teem has not been ordered primarily for polemical purposes, but is offered in a way that should attract the more informed of general readers as well as the academic student of literature.

His comparisons are natural and organic, neither schematically motivated nor adjusted to a desiderated "proof." The double field—no longer a dual camp, whence irresistible "influences" invade opposite territories—is widely and dispassionately re-explored. Developments in the drama, poetry and novel of France and England are observed in themselves with a corrective tendency in favour of differentiation rather than of assimilation. It would require an equally wide and minute knowledge properly to estimate Professor Green's findings. His method, or rather his fusion of vivid illustration and detailed criticism, is perhaps most concisely and convincingly applied in the middle section on poetry. The emphasis generally is, as might be expected, on the foreign side. But it is a relief to find a serious student of French literature still able to consider a couple of collateral developments without being tempted to sacrifice the intrinsic life of the one to the indebtedness of the other.

A notice published in the *London Mercury* on the appearance of one of *Minuet's* predecessors claimed that history rather than criticism was the author's concern. The balance is now more equal. Professor Green's convictions lead him to challenge the conclusions of scholars like Lanson and MM. Baldensperger and Van Tieghem, whom, of course, he recognizes as the authorities they are in their separate specialisms. His disagreement with "pre-romantic" comparatists on points in the history in France of Pope, Thomson, Gray, Young and McPherson are incidental to discussions of some of the most significant works of these poets. The refutation of the now time-honoured conclusions of Joseph Texte, whose initiative Professor Green acknowledges while regretting the bias and effect of his thesis, is elaborated with analyses of numerous eighteenth-century novels, English and French. Severities are rare. They are usually confined to the appendices, one of which, it should be noticed, is devoted to the author's discovery of a forgotten English translation of *Manon Lescaut*, whose existence had been suspected by R. S. Garnett.

Our reservations are few and superficial. *Minuet* is a large book, packed with picturesque details and descriptions interspersed with useful episodes and debates. Of the many students who are sure to consult it, some may sigh for a few more summaries or conclusions to help them to grasp in rapid survey something "condensed" about the extensive and often inaccessible regions which the author knows so well.

Nor do the titles always play the rôle of signposts. The "common reader," as well as the student, will admire a courageous effort to tackle the grandest, and perhaps the most gratuitous, subject for comparison in modern literature: Shakespeare and Racine. But it will have to be sought under the rubric, "The Philosopher and the Poet." The writing seems at its best in the discussion of definite points. It is perhaps a trifle less reliable in the presentation of vaster themes, generalizations and introductions. The recurrence of the word "alchemy," usually with reference to the operations of Shakespeare's genius, has probably escaped the author's notice. So have at least two infinitesimal slips, the "Du" for "De" in a verse on p. 256, and the association of Escobar with Arnaud as "Jansenists" on p. 217 (note 1). These minutiae provide the occasion for a comment on the general excellence of the production.

P. MANSELL JONES

ADVENTURE

MUNGO PARK AND THE NIGER. By STEPHEN GWYNN. Golden Hind Series. The Bodley Head. 12s. 6d.

MEN of action generally write well; men of action are presumably practical; all of us are told that we live in "a practical world"—and yet the works of travellers and adventurers rarely remain in the mid-stream of reading people's memory. Mr. Gwynn does well to remind us that Mungo Park was modern; that he must not be confused with Marco Polo (who was not)—and yet, once again, who except such specialists in travel-books as Mr. Gwynn or Mr. Clennell Wilkinson has read, perhaps even wished to read, that literary success of 1799, Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior of Africa*?

That a succinct biography was called for is evident, and the sensitive, beautiful face in the frontispiece to Mr. Gwynn's raises delicious expectations. Park (how bare that surname sounds alone) was born in Scotland in 1771, became a surgeon in the mercantile marine, went to Sumatra, excited the natural philosophers of his day by the botanical and other specimens that he brought home, became employed by the African Association, traversed part of the uncharted waters of the Niger, made a hit with his book upon them, turned fashionable leech at Peebles, went to Africa again in 1805, and died in an affray with the niggers. His own book must really be considered a classic. It is entirely forgotten by the vast reading public of to-day.

His quest for the unknown river, his partial but pregnant discoveries, the vast door he opened to posterity, and the immense use since made of this by the nation with whom England (who sent out Park) was then at war, are Mr. Gwynn's limited theme here. He proves as captivating as his hero who was chosen by the Association for more sober qualities than an earlier man (selected for "the manliness of his person, the breadth of his chest, and the inquietude of his eye")! Park was a trained, though youthful traveller, and physically as hardy as could be. His adventures, as adventures, hold the reader, whom it would be a shame to fob off with anything less than assurance that Mr. Gwynn has a literary treat in store for every stay-at-home whether scientific, merely lazy, or avid for a true narrative of strange but fruitful deeds.

OSBERT BURDETT

THE ENDLESS ADVENTURE

THE ENDLESS ADVENTURE. By F. S. OLIVER. Macmillan. Vol. III. 10s.

THE late Mr. F. S. Oliver, who died a year ago with his latest book unfinished, was an interesting example of relativity in the development of political thought. He was born and brought up a Liberal of the strictest Gladstonian type, but the Home Rule split shattered the base of his inherited philosophy, and henceforth the State was more to him than the individuals or even the minorities of which it is composed. It was characteristic of the man's thoroughness that he should seek to justify the position he had taken in a book, and in his famous study of Alexander Hamilton the American Unionists get very much the best of it against the Jeffersonians and advocates of States Rights.

It would have seemed natural to follow this up with a Life of Abraham Lincoln, the greatest Unionist of them all. But Oliver was a busy man, the head of a great commercial house who took his duties seriously; and his second work, *Ordeal by Battle*, which was published ten years later, was a war-tract several hundred pages long—an able piece of propaganda, but no more.

Then, to the surprise of all his friends, he happened upon Walpole—the unheroic Robert of the Bedford Gang and the Whig supremacy in the eighteenth century. Not even Oliver could make a genius of Walpole, but he became a useful peg on which to hang portraits of almost forgotten politicians of the first two Georges, and a frame which could be made to contain the final edition of Oliver's political philosophy. The portraits are among the best things that have been done in this genre for a long time, but the philosophy is regrettably less convincing.

The State, in Oliver's view, has now become superior not merely to the individual and the minority but to morality and justice; it is the business of the statesman to deceive the enemy abroad and to corrupt (*i.e.*, bribe) the enemy (*i.e.*, opponents) at home. Possibly, even probably; but that course is not to be defended quite in the light-hearted and ingenuous way that Oliver does it. Deception may be necessary in some grave crisis where the very existence of the State would be jeopardized by frankness, but public wrong, unlike private murder, always will out in the end, and it has to be paid for at compound interest the next time, when a solemn assurance is politely accepted—and disbelieved. But there is not a hint of this in Oliver's treatment of the problem of the double standard of public and private morality.

It may be, of course, that he would have added something had he been spared, for the book is a torso. But there is no indication whatever that Oliver was conscious of the existence of this hole in his treatment, and it seems to mark a definite limit to his capacity for political thought.

In another direction, however, it is clear that Oliver was not quite satisfied with his philosophy of history. The study of the quest for power and the business of governing men appealed to him as the "endless adventure" of his title: but what in the end did it all amount to? If he believed in progress in human society, there is no sign of it here. Rather the contrary, in fact; for the book ends with an unanswered question: Is the Roof of the World going to fall in?

The deep pessimism of this query is unexplained in the text; but from his general attitude it is certain that his fear of the future had nothing to do with armaments or war, but sprang from the belief that Government is itself an unstable equipoise subject without warning to violent volcanic explosions from below. Unfortunately this does not seem to have suggested to Oliver that the basis of his ideal national State, or of

any actual State in being, is insecure because of some defect in human nature or society ; nor did he choose to explore the prospects or the possibilities of the Imperial State, and its conceivable extension, the International State. His name, therefore, will live as a biographer, not as a philosopher ; which is the exact opposite of what he would have wished.

A. WYATT TILBY

CORVO'S DREAM FANTASY

THE DESIRE AND PURSUIT OF THE WHOLE. A Romance of Modern Venice.

By FREDERICK ROLFE BARON CORVO. Introduction by A. J. A. SYMONS. Cassell.
12s. 6d.

THOSE who have read that unusual experimental biography, *The Quest for Corvo*, will not be disappointed by this last romance which Mr. Symons has discovered for us. He is, perhaps, inclined to over-praise Rolfe's style. But, despite occasional and magnificent sequences, that style is really vicious ; the 'eighties and 'nineties jostle in it, Marion Crawford and the Yellow Book. Nevertheless, in these days of standardization and poetic utilitarianism, this extravagant product will attract those who can still "eat strange food in dreams." Rolfe was, in his way, a prodigy and his self-tormented Catholic genius was Continental in quality. Generally speaking, English Catholic writers, thanks to a sound Protestant upbringing, have been happy after their submission : but this son of a prim Anglican piano-maker was as tormented as Huysmans and as priestly as Renan. The Decadents of the 'nineties failed in their Baudelaire cult because they lacked spiritual experience of sin. But Rolfe, alias Baron Corvo, is convincing in his despair and wretchedness. His ferocious caricature of that popular novelist, the late Mgr. Robert Hugh Benson, in this book, under the name of the Reverend Bobugo Bonsen, is aflame not only with professional jealousy but with the hatred of the self-damned for the self-saved.

Against a dark background of personal hatred and of malicious but enjoyable attacks on the unfortunate English colony in Venice, the romance of two lovers moves brightly. An earthquake precipitates the arrival of the hero's platonic affinity and this unusual heroine is as yet in the androgynous stage of emotional development. Corvo takes the outworn romantic device of the maiden masquerading in male attire, stigmatizes it delicately, platonizes it, combines, in fact, an extraordinary morbidezza with an idyllic innocence.

This Adriatic romance owes its peculiar quality to the fact that it is a compensatory dream-fantasy. Hate and obsession simplify the mind and Corvo, in his self-conflict and frustrated egoism, fits with suspicious ease into the rather crude framework of psycho-analysis. The unhappy creature was half-starving, as Mr. Symons tells us, when he wrote this last testament, working on it with the exquisite care of vindictiveness. Nothing is more tragic than the happy ending in which the author-hero, as he clasps his affinitive love, receives a letter from a heaven-inspired publisher in London, accepting his novel and enclosing an advance on royalties of seven hundred guineas. Here indeed is the compensatory fantasy.

AUSTIN CLARKE

A SAGA OF MEAN STREETS

THE FURYS. By JAMES HANLEY. Chatto and Windus. 10s. 6d.

MODERN realism may well have reached the breaking point. It is possible that in a few years the novels of Faulkner, Hemingway and others may seem in retrospect the product of imaginative excitement and disorderly nerves. At any rate, Mr. James Hanley appears to think so, judging by the drastic suddenness with which he has changed his own method. This new work will puzzle his admirers, however willing they may be to acknowledge his courage and independence of mind. He presents us here with the first part of a saga of the working class and he begins by breaking all the fashionable rules. The saga of industrial areas and mean streets should be shocking in its squalor and despair. Grim navvies should hurtle past us, drunken sailors trip over our feet, prostitutes assail our ears with shrill obscenities. The customary pages of oaths, curses, descriptions of natural functions, agonies of disease and childbirth—all these have disappeared. Mr. Hanley, in fact, approaches his theme with a restraint that is positively startling and leaves us in air. He has even invented for his characters a careful convention of speech which appears unreal at first unless we accept it as the language of the inner self. He has given a natural dignity to ill-housed people, restored the soul to those whom Dr. Inge has called the C3 population.

Everyone knows, of course, that factory hands, dockers, lorry-drivers are quiet creatures, much too tired after their day's toil to indulge in the Gargantuan excitements provided for them by realistic novelists. But in abandoning the picturesque support of grime, violence and slang, in returning to those great passions which, according to classic convention, shape and give significance to human conduct, Mr. Hanley risks his reputation. He applies a modern technique, slowed down, to a theme which is traditional in its arranged contrasts and fundamental motives. He has, however, kept that drastic honesty which is the real contribution of our period to literature. In moments of provocation, for instance, his characters can forget their classic destiny and relapse into those totemistic expletives which are now accepted with pious resignation by polite readers.

Against the crowded background of an industrial town near Liverpool, Mr. Hanley depicts solidly an Irish household of the second generation. The method may be episodic but the characterization is as satisfying as the three dimensions themselves. The scene centres around Mrs. Fury and the tragic destruction of her life's aim, caused by the return of her youngest son in disgrace from an Irish seminary. The theme has been frequently used in plays and stories of the Irish literary movement, but Mr. Hanley gives it new force. The peculiar spiritual drama is offset by the very material one of labour trouble and transport strikes.

It would be unfair to judge the contemplated trilogy as yet, and difficult to guess the development of a saga which starts a few years before the War. But Mr. Hanley's determination to dig his foundations deeply, his sudden dissatisfaction with the sensational method that is prevalent may perhaps be symptomatic.

A. C.

NEW BOOKS—A SELECTED LIST

THE BOOKS IN THIS LIST, IN ADDITION TO THOSE WHICH HAVE BEEN REVIEWED IN THE PRECEDING PAGES, HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AFTER CAREFUL SCRUTINY FROM A MUCH LARGER NUMBER OF CURRENT PUBLICATIONS.

ART

THE CONQUEST OF UGLINESS. By JOHN DE LA VALETTE. Methuen. 8s. 6d.

Those who have been puzzled or stimulated by the Exhibition of British Art in Industry will be interested in this collection of essays by persons of taste who have all been concerned in its organizing. The Prince of Wales, in a brief foreword, warns manufacturers that they will not expand their markets unless they pay more attention to æsthetic appeal. Professor Goodhart-Rendel, in a witty essay on "The Fitness of Ornament," prophesies that the reign of starkness is over and hints at "gaieties to come." Mr. Gordon Russell weighs the claims and aims of hand and machine. Mr. E. M. O'R. Dickey discusses the art training of the young. All concerned in letting us make and use more beautiful things are instructed and exhorted.

DRAMA

TWELVE ONE-ACT PLAYS. Selected by GEOFFREY WHITWORTH. Sidgwick and Jackson. 5s.

Here is good money's worth for any amateur dramatic society. Mr. Whitworth, as Director of the British Drama League, knows what he is about when choosing pieces for amateur players, and gives in this dozen a wide range of tone and subject. One, calling for women characters only, is sure to become a favourite with Women's Institutes; another is in slick clipped dialogue for a polished pair; a third is impressive in the "Third Floor Back" way, while a fourth exploits the humours of a country cottage whose inmates are not so simple as antique furniture hunters assume them to be.

MODERN ONE-ACT PLAYS. From the French. Translated by VIRGINIA and FRANK VERNON. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d. The British stage-made play is regulated by the law of supply and demand, but the Little Theatre movement, both in this country and America, seems to disprove this law. The dearth of one-act plays should make this

volume of excellent translations all the more welcome. But the diversity of the selection is, in itself, almost a drawback. Some of these plays are too conventional to attract experimental producers but should appeal to amateur companies. Sacha Guitry's amusing curtain-raiser, *Villa for Sale*, Lucien Chantel's Grand Guignol thriller, *Who Killed Me?* are at the opposite extremes from Henri Duvernois' psychological fantasy *The Bronze Lady and the Crystal Gentleman* or Maurice Rostand's imaginative interpretation of the past.

FICTION

YOUNG PASQUIER. By GEORGES DUHAMEL. Dent. 7s. 6d.

Young Pasquier, Miss Beatrice de Holthoir's admirable translation of the second volume of Duhamel's *La Chronique des Pasquiers*, is in every respect as impressive a piece of work as its predecessor, *News from Havre*. The upward struggle of the lower middle-class is carried one stage farther: the child of the earlier volume has grown into an adolescent perplexed by a naïve idealism and emergent sensuality, and the dramatic centre of the book is in the relationship between the desperate boy and his hypocritical amoral father. It is impossible to praise too highly the skill with which M. Duhamel conveys an inner symbolism without diminishing the reality of his characters. Everything that is said is strictly true to a conception of objective life, but in addition the words fulfil the evocative function of poetry. *La Chronique des Pasquiers* is a work of art in the same class as Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes*.

LAND UNDER ENGLAND. By JOSEPH O'NEILL. With a Foreword by A.E. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Joseph O'Neill respects the conventions of mystery stories. The ancestral family curse, the mysterious secret passage in the Roman Wall, the descent of the hero into subterranean regions in search of his lost

father—these will astonish no one. But Mr. O'Neill's phosphorescent forests, monstrous fungi and insects have an original weirdness of their own. The Utopia which Anthony Julian discovers in the eternal darkness of the earth is both edifying and significant. Mr. O'Neill segregates a portion of the old Roman state, subjects it to intensive mental cultivation and offers us the result as a warning against contemporary political sophistry.

SARABAND FOR DEAD LOVERS. By

HELEN SIMPSON. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

This is the story of why Sophia-Dorothea of Zelle, though she had been married to her cousin George, eldest son of Sophia Electress of Hanover and later our George I, never came with him to be Queen of England. "Saraband" is not quite the right word for this tale of the stupid brutalities of the Court of Hanover. It promises a finer elegance, tenderer romance than Miss Simpson, with her downright unsentimentality and her lapses into unnecessary detail in the bedroom scenes, gives us. But the novel is a skilful entertainment, free from smell of the student's lamp or pedagogic determination to impart historic fact.

THE DARING YOUNG MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE. By WILLIAM

SAROYAN. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d.

Though Mr. Saroyan's "anti-clever" style may antagonize at first, the reader will soon realize that it is made up for by his matter; and next, that it is right. This book—not of stories, but of states of mind, of the little fragments of experience that illustrate an idea—is a strong and brilliant statement, or rather picture, of the problems that are worrying Mr. Saroyan—of the one and the many, self and not-self, time, place and America.

LADY CHATTERLEY'S SECOND HUSBAND. By JEHANNE D'ORLIAC. Long.

7s. 6d.

A sequel to the D. H. Lawrence novel with positively no flutters for the censor; Lady Chatterley takes on parenthood, finds that "life and nothing more" with a gamekeeper is not enough, substitutes responsibility for sensuality and reverts to comfort and the upper classes. Mlle. D'Orliac displays logical understanding of Lawrence and a complete lack of imaginative understanding. She refutes the surface falsity of *Lady Chatterley's*

Lover but misses the underlying truth, and fails to take into account the element of genius in Lawrence which vindicated the most preposterous ideas.

THE APPLE OF CONCORD. By RICHARD CHURCH. Dent. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Richard Church might have written a grim study of the injustices of the present English divorce system. Instead of that, he subjects his disillusioned hero to the Continental cure. Gregory Wade had, with complete chivalry, permitted his wife to divorce him, and found that he had to pay a large amount in alimony. In Paris, however, two American women and one French woman surround him with psychological and emotional attentions. The secondary theme of impotence, which George Moore was accustomed to treat comically, is used by Mr. Church with modern seriousness and sincerity.

IN THE LAST COACH. By LEONHARD FRANK. Translated by CYRUS BROOKS.

Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.

Eight short stories by the author of *Carl and Anna*; lively, if not distinctively original, presentations of individual problems in the modern world. The method is a kind of simplified slow-motion picture of mental processes, to which some subtlety is added by the irony of contrasts. The result is work of great clarity with some suggestion of depth.

A DERBYSHIRE TRAGEDY. By F. C. BODEN. Dent. 7s. 6d.

Another story of life in a mining village, by the author of *Miner*, told in a quiet, steady tone, and without a note of raucous bitterness, or blind sentiment. By the invention of a story which is admirably compact and suggestive, and by allowing the personal aspect of the tragedy predominance over the social, Mr. Boden has given to the ideas which underly his book a peculiar force, which is too often lacking in novels less subtly propagandist.

I AM YOUR BROTHER. By G. S. MARLOWE. Collins. 7s. 6d.

Though he would seem to be trying to make the flesh creep Mr. Marlowe often achieves but the cruder feat of making the gorge rise. The dust-jacket blurb informs us that "the book is the study of an artist's soul." The artist goes mad under the strain of secreting and supporting a monster brother who eats



HYDE PARK CORNER [1826-1828]

Watercolour perspective showing the Constitution Hill arch and the Park screen as originally planned by Decimus Burton. From the Library Exhibition at the Royal Institute of British Architects

raw "insides." We assume the monster to be non-existent—a symbol of the artist's baser self. The writing is clever enough to inspire wishes that Mr. Marlowe will abandon the turnip ghost manner.

AMERICAN EARTH. By ERSKINE CALDWELL. Secker. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Caldwell is an American novelist to be taken seriously. In these stories of New England and the Southern States he writes with fastidious economy of a society always simple, often crude, sometimes bestial: a farmer exhibiting his wife to his friends, two mill-hands murdering drunk on pay-day, a group of tradespeople spending an enjoyable Saturday afternoon at a lynching. The Hemingway understatement without the Hemingway sadism; powerfully compact on a small scale.

THE FLYING YEARS. By FREDERICK NIVEN. Collins. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Niven's novels resemble one another only in sound and admirable workmanship. The scenes of his new story are laid for the most part in the Canadian West—only one generation back, but before the development of that great area had been undertaken—and it is interesting and even comic to compare the author's methods with those employed in the normal fiction of the Wild West. As for results, he extracts only a little less excitement and a thousand times more beauty and romance than his more violent rivals manage to do.

ROUND TRIP. By DON TRACY. Constable. 7s. 6d.

A sensational, hardboiled tale of American journalism. The public which likes drink, seduction and violent death will find few more generous hosts than Mr. Tracy. He hustles; he loves to appear a tough guy while all the time sheltering a heart of gold; and he knows how to tell a story. His book will be widely read. It is highly entertaining and it promises, even more than most American novels, to be one of the celluloid successes of 1936.

MY NEXT BRIDE. By KAY BOYLE. Faber. 7s. 6d.

Victoria comes, fresh, innocent and American, to Paris to fall in with a squabbling gang of art-lifers, Isadora-Duncanites without the genius. A gay young outsider, American too, dashes up and asks her how many lovers she has had. She tells him none.

Presently, when she is trying hard not to have a baby, he irrelevantly commits suicide in New York. Miss Boyle has authentic gifts of sensitiveness and literary ability, but the attempt to drive an arty sophistication in team with an arty naïveté is not a happy one. THE MILLS OF GOD. By ERNST LOTHAR.

Translated by WILLA and EDWIN MUIR. Secker. 7s. 6d.

Herr Lothar takes for his theme a problem which is of interest to all thoughtful people. Are there circumstances under which euthanasia is justifiable? At her own request a husband gives an overdose of veronal to his wife who is dying of cancer in slow agony and he is tried for murder. The case is stated almost too perfectly, for the protagonist is a judge, but the dramatic plight of the accused enables the novelist to drive home his legal moral. The story is thorough in its detail and lacks the swift purpose to which Galsworthy has accustomed us. But the homely glimpses of a Salzburg unknown to tourists are of interest in themselves.

TANNENBRAE. By GEORGE WODEN. Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Woden has given variety to the old *motif* of a will and its effect on swarming relatives. Over his crowded story of Glasgow broods the presence of Williamena Stenburn slowly dying in her big house at Tannenbrae. She is a great character though we have but the memories of her two marriages in the remote Victorian past and her amazing activities as a business woman. The Airds, the bibulous Alexander Mearnsides, Lang, the cobbler, Ronald Omiston, a provincial artist, are among the numerous characters kept waiting in trepidation. Mr. Woden depicts the daily life of Glasgow, its shops, its customers, its mendicants.

FIDDLER'S FOLLY. By JOY BAINES. Harrap. 7s. 6d. net.

An improbable but vivacious and persuasive story of a conventional husband, a pretty wife and a gipsy. Setting: Sussex in the eighteen-sixties.

THE WOLVES. By GUY MAZELINE. Lovat Dickson. 10s. 6d.

For this gigantic study of futility which was awarded the Prix Goncourt in 1932, M. Mazeline has adopted the desultory vagueness without the spiritual exaltation of Russian literature. His theme is the decadence of a rich, bourgeois family in Havre

culminating in the suicide of the idle, dissatisfied father. The book is far too long, but M. Mazeline has a genuine talent for sordid evocation.

THE WHITE PEONY. By EVELYN HERBERT. Cape. 7s. 6d.

A study of life in a Welsh mining town. Miss Herbert understands and can express the peculiar quality in the Welsh temperament which sometimes appears as intense emotionalism and sometimes as a spiritual fortitude that is very rare and fine. One daughter of the family described is wrecked by this quality: another is enabled by it to triumph over poverty and squalor. The contrast between the gloomy background and the poetic spirit of the young girl should have been more sharply drawn. But this is a perceptive and courageously romantic tale.

WE HAVE COME TO A COUNTRY. By LETTICE COOPER. Gollancz. 7s. 6d.

There is something a little too painstakingly contemporary about Miss Lettice Cooper's story of an unemployment centre in the industrial North. But she is a sympathetic and acute observer. Her contrasted portraits of unemployed men, of different types of "helper," of a neurotic Superintendent, of a wintry University don, are admirably drawn. The relations between these people are convincingly if not excitingly described.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

TRIPLE CHALLENGE. By HUGH WANSEY BAYLY. Hutchinson. 18s.

Dr. Hugh Wansey Bayly expounds his opinions with a vigour more often associated with the club armchair than with the sacrosanct consulting-rooms of Harley Street. But he challenges medical mysticism with as much pertinence as the traditionalism of the Admiralty during the War. We may suspect a biology which substantiates so agreeably Dr. Bayly's views of Nordic race purification, but must admire his fearless public fight against religious obscurantism in helping to establish the Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease.

VENTURES AND VISIONS. By GEORGE GARRO JONES. Hutchinson. 18s.

Captain Garro Jones describes himself politically as an anti-anti-Socialist, but the subtlety of this definition is more apparent than real. Nevertheless the habit of parlia-

mentary opposition once formed induces its own originalities of combative approach. As Member for Hackney, Captain Jones enlivened many a dull sitting. Resting for a moment at the age of forty to consider a crowded past, he recalls his experiences as bank-clerk, air pilot, private secretary in three Government departments, journalist and barrister. His visions are prolix. But he has a shrewd, rough-and-ready estimation of his fellow beings which is stimulating. Among many amusing glimpses is that of the late Horatio Bottomley banqueting, with his eye to business, among his sycophants.

THE LIFE OF CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN. By ALFRED NEUMANN. Hutchinson. 18s.

To Christina, whose character is so modern and so complex, Herr Neumann has been drawn—almost inevitably—for the subject of another of his full-length studies; and if, at first, his book seems merely painstaking, it manages to assert in time its claim to thoroughness. His steady-going, prosaic style, has a kind of merit when it is applied to a heroine whose picturesque qualities have attracted literary as well as cinematographic showmen. His sensational theme gives his lack of mobility the appearance of balance.

PITCAIRN'S ISLAND. By CHARLES NORDHOFF and JAMES NORMAN HALL. Chapman and Hall. 7s. 6d.

This is the third volume of the author's trilogy of the famous *Bounty* mutiny and its aftermath, narrating the adventures of the mutineers who, with their women, took refuge on Pitcairn Island. Fifteen men landed in 1790. When the community was discovered in 1808 but one remained. Drink and the devil (disguised as the demand for private ownership of land) had done for the rest. The book is frank adventure yarn—imaginative presentation of the known facts. The dialogue is a little stiff, but the tale is a good one.

THE DELIVERER OF HELEN KELLER. By ANNE SULLIVAN MACY. By NELLA BRADDY. Muller. 12s. 6d.

Helen Keller is rightly known the world over as "a glorious symbol of what the blind can do." Here Miss Braddy tells the story of the person she calls "the dynamo in the basement" of that achievement, Miss

Keller's teacher and lifelong friend. The book amply justifies itself. The development of young Anne Sullivan's keen intelligence (manifest in her early letters about Helen Keller) out of an appalling childhood is remarkable. The association of the two women is well described.

THE MURDER OF THE ROMANOVS.

By CAPTAIN PAUL BULYGIN, including "The Road to the Tragedy," by ALEXANDER KERENSKY. Hutchinson. 18s.

Captain Bulygin's ingenuously loyalist account of the execution of the Romanovs is preceded by a long and interesting foreword by Kerensky which throws the whole tragedy into its proper perspective. Kerensky displays a generous personal sympathy with the Tsar, whom he made every effort to save from the appalling brutality of the Bolsheviks, but shows how completely the Imperial Family had forfeited the esteem and affection of their people.

JOURNAL, 1803. By WASHINGTON IRVING. Edited by S. T. WILLIAMS. Oxford University Press. 12s. 6d.

Washington Irving's fragmentary journal of a tour from New York to the St. Lawrence is expensive at this price. But as the earliest travel diary of "the father of American literature," it will be of some value to the literary historian. There is besides an intrinsic interest in these notes on early frontier life jotted down by a cheerfully insensitive but observant young man of twenty.

LITERARY

UNDERCURRENTS OF INFLUENCE IN ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETRY.

By MARGARET SHERWOOD. Harvard University Press. Humphrey Milford. 15s.

A serious study of an interesting subject—the genesis of the philosophic ideas of the "Romantic" poets in the eighteenth century. Professor Sherwood shows how the idea of evolution gradually ousted the conception of a completed and static universe, and emphasizes the importance of Herder's "Philosophy of History" in interpreting life as an endless development. There is an interesting chapter on the thought of Shaftesbury. Henry Brooke, Pope, Thomson, Akenside and Young; and detailed consideration is given to Wordsworth, Keats and Browning.

THEMES AND CONVENTIONS OF ELIZABETHAN TRAGEDY. By M. C. BRADBROOK. Cambridge University Press. 12s. 6d.

Miss Bradbrook's work illustrates the new tendency in Elizabethan studies. She has been more influenced by the desultory intimations of contemporary literary critics than by the dogmatic statements of professors. In attempting to define the attitude of Elizabethans themselves to a living drama she shows ingenuity in discovering angles of approach. She describes, for instance, the particular conventions of gesture and delivery necessitated by the fact that the actors performed in daylight.

THE ART OF THE LOGOS. By J. A. K. THOMSON. Allen and Unwin. 7s. 6d.

The Logos here means the traditional story which existed orally before narrative was written. Invention was restrained while repetition was variegated. Mr. Thomson begins with Herodotus as the first writer whose method can be studied. He reviews conscious and unconscious fiction (in myth and legend), and ends with the art of the story-teller. It studies the foundations on which story-tellers build, much as others study the process of creation in a single mind from the variations of a writer's MS. The book is interesting, but the Muses keep their secrets still. The discussion of Herodotus (and inferentially of Homer) is perhaps its chief virtue.

MISCELLANEOUS

DAMNABLE OPINIONS. By LLEWELYN POWYS. Watts. 3s. 6d.

In a more robust age than ours these essays might have earned the forcible title which Mr. Powys attaches, rather self-consciously, to them. But to-day his passionate belief in life itself, his religion of imaginative sensuousness can scarcely be regarded as shocking. He has the zeal, the single-mindedness of a belated heretic and for that reason he is attracted to figures such as Newman or, crossing the ages, Augustine. His criticism of them is perhaps more illuminating than the orthodox admirations of believers. If the first essay, "Africa's Wisdom," consists almost of one long-sustained purple passage, the imaginative intensity is at least in keeping

with the formidable vision of procreant Nature presented to us. With Africa's message in his heart, Mr. Powys trespasses upon the trim lawns of Anglican piety.

GROWING OPINION. A Symposium of British Youth Outlook. Edited by ALAN CAMPBELL-JOHNSON. Methuen. 6s.

An anthology on various important topics contributed by writers under the age of twenty-five could hardly fail to be interesting, and this symposium has the additional merit of corroborating Professor J. B. S. Haldane's prefatorial assertion that "These young men and women are far clearer-headed than were their predecessors ten years ago." We also share his regret that while the book covers education, art, sport, politics, etc., science, and, let us add, architecture (with its vital problems of housing and planning), are neglected.

MUSIC

"MASTER MUSICIANS" SERIES. Re-edited by ERIC BLOM. *Chopin* by J. CUTHBERT HADDEN. *Mendelssohn* by S. STEPHEN STRATTON. *Schumann* by ARNIE PATTERSON. *Schubert* by E. DUNCAN. Dent. 4s. 6d. each.

The revival of this series thirty years after its first appearance testifies to its reliability for standard reference. Mr. Blom as general editor has performed the extensive labour of bringing each volume up-to-date with admirable tact and thoroughness. Of particular value are his new and minutely detailed appendixes—tables of personæ and comparative chronology, catalogue of works, brief list of contiguous biographies, and bibliography. The four latest volumes read pleasantly since three of their subjects were at least as interesting persons as artists, though, as Mr. Blom realizes, the books, as "biography," incline to be weak or incomplete on the psychological side.

POETRY AND VERSE

POEMS, 1925-1934. By T. L. W. HUBBARD. Oxford, Blackwell. 5s.

COVERT ON HELICON: VERSES AND TRANSLATIONS. By J. C. STEWART. Oxford, Blackwell. 4s. 6d.

These two volumes, printed at Mr. Newdigate's Shakespeare Head Press, are admirable examples of how much can be done by

good book-production to improve the effect made by a small collection of verse. Binding, paper and typography all show thought, good taste, and an absence of affectation which predisposes the reader to enjoy the poems they enshrine. Mr. Hubbard one suspects of being still a young man. He has some gift of phrase and can handle his verse-forms (which include the sonnet) with apparent ease. Yet it would not be surprising if eventually his literary facility served him more profitably in prose. To Mr. Stewart versification has evidently been for many years a pleasing avocation. He always writes like a scholar, and is at his best in rendering Greek and Latin epigrams and lyrics into English.

AMERICAN SONG. By PAUL ENGLE. Cape. 5s.

A collection of verse by a young American writer who won a prize for the best poem about the Century of Progress Exposition at Chicago, 1933. Mr. Engle writes with enthusiasm about the history and with optimism about the future of his country; his verse has a great deal of vigour though not much subtlety. There are echoes of Pound and Macleish throughout the book, which shows distinct visual imagination.

THE ILIAD OF HOMER. Translated by SIR WILLIAM MARRIS. Oxford University Press. 6s.

The publishers claim only that this translation is readable. It would indeed be unusually so, with its refreshing simplicity and lack of archaism, if it were in prose. But alas, it scans, gaining nothing thereby but frequently maladjusted emphasis, and if a prose crib is dull for the lay reader, a scanning one is soporific. It is useless to attempt a verse translation of Homer in a spirit of modesty.

EPITHALAMIA. A poem by IDA GRAVES with associate wood-engraving by BLAIR HUGHES-STANTON. The Gemini Press. 30s.

As the first publication of the Gemini Press, which was founded by Mr. Hughes-Stanton "to make books in which there is a real fusion between contemporary writer and artist," this finely produced volume demands attention. The experiment is successful in revealing that it is possible for poetry and illustration to be interdependent. Not only were the twenty-three engravings cut as the poem progressed but occasionally a drawing

directed the accompanying stanza. The poem has a strength and beauty appropriate to its theme and although occasionally the pompous terminology of eighteenth-century decasyllabics obtrudes the general dignity and appeal of the stanzas reflect and are reflected in the artist's work.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

THE WORLD AS I SEE IT. By ALBERT EINSTEIN. John Lane. 8s. 6d.

In this book, Mr. Alan Harris has collected a variety of articles, papers, and pronouncements by Professor Einstein with the object of giving a picture of the man himself. The outbreak of the Nazi revolution in Germany, coupled with the circumstance of Einstein's being a Jew, has obscured the figure of the world's greatest scientist with the mists of political passion and racial prejudice. The present book is an attempt to correct current misrepresentations by allowing Einstein to paint his own picture. The figure that emerges is surprisingly commonplace. It is that of a kindly but abstracted scientist, the praiseworthiness of whose intentions in regard to humanity is in inverse proportion to his knowledge of the intractable material which he so earnestly admonishes. Only in the last section of the book, when he writes of science itself, does the reader realize that here is a great man.

EPICURUS IN ENGLAND (1650-1725).

By THOMAS FRANKLIN MAYO. The Southwest Press, Dallas, Texas.

A thorough and very interesting study of the brief popularity enjoyed by Epicureanism in English thought at the end of the seventeenth century. Though its actual influence is seen to have been only slight, the sympathetic hedonism, materialism and utilitarianism of Hobbes and the Restoration caused it to receive much friendly attention, till it disappeared, with these, before the idealists of the reign of Queen Anne.

SPORT

THE SPORTSMAN'S LIBRARY: Vol. I

—*Riding and Horsemanship*, by WILLIAM FAWCETT. Vol. II—*Coarse Fishing*, by A. J. RUDD. Vol. III—*Sea Fishing*, by Major D. P. LEA BIRCH. Vol. IV—

Gun Dogs and their Training, by ATWOOD CLARK. Philip Allan. Each 5s.

Strongly reminiscent of the Badminton Library (but at half the cost), each of these four volumes is written by an acknowledged expert. Mr. Fawcett, reliable and informative as usual, has produced a work that would be invaluable to anyone about to undertake the slightly nerve-racking experience of learning to ride. Mr. Rudd writes agreeably and to the point on Coarse Fishing. He introduces several novel theories; his description of a pike taking a bait is interesting and probably correct. Sea Fishing is a comparatively undeveloped sport of which the author of Vol. IV writes enthusiastically. The Library has made a good start, and if the remainder of the books maintain the same high standard, the result will be excellent.

TOPOGRAPHY AND TRAVEL

JOCK OF THE ISLANDS: EARLY DAYS IN THE SOUTH SEAS. By JOHN CROMAR. Faber. 8s. 6d.

"The captain's revolver spoke." There is a good deal of that kind of talk in these free informal reminiscences of the recruiting of native labour from Pacific Islands in the last days of the trade fifty years ago. Much of the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands was still unexplored, cannibalism was common, and one had literally to watch one's step pace by pace. Distrust of Natives, A Close Shave, Besieged by Women, A Curious Native Custom, The Feast, Rescued, Native Morality—these headings indicate the contents of Mr. Cromar's book.

FIVE WATERSHEDS. By REGINALD BRAY. Cape. 10s. 6d.

An individual account of a winter journey by two young Englishmen, tramping and sledging, from Norwegian through Swedish and Finnish to Russian territory. It is perhaps too individual; Mr. Bray is an Old Harrovian, but writes at times like a rather young one. His story, mainly of hardships amid snow and ice, with interludes in isolated villages, is, however, a good one, well rounded off by his arrest in Russia. Sometimes it all seemed "too bloody to be worth while," at others magnificent.

FORTHCOMING BOOKS

W. G. Fay, who with his brother Frank founded the first company of "Irish players," has collaborated with Mrs. Catherine Carswell, the biographer of D. H. Lawrence, in a book to be published by Messrs. Rich and Cowan in April. In *The Fays of the Abbey Theatre*, the authors tell the story of the modest beginnings and splendid development of the dramatic movement in Ireland; when the Irish players and the Irish dramatists, with W. B. Yeats and Synge to give lustre to their enterprise, combined to form the Irish National Theatre, and made the Abbey Theatre famous throughout the world.

The late William Archer, who took an intense interest in the study of dreams, was engaged in writing a book on the subject at the time of his death. He left behind him a manuscript partly finished, partly in draft; and numerous notes and records of his dream-observations over ten years. This material has been put together by Mr. Theodore Besterman in the form in which he believes that Archer intended it to appear. It will be published on the 28th of this month—ten years after Archer's death—by Messrs. Methuen.

Two contemporary poets whose work is worth attention are represented in the spring lists by volumes of collected verse. One is Mr. William Empson, already well known in modern anthologies such as *New Signatures*, whose book is due from Messrs. Chatto and Windus in the early spring. The other, Mr. George Barker, a new young poet of individual mind, some of whose work has already been seen in these pages. Messrs. Faber and Faber will issue his book on March 14th.

The Complete Letters of Charles Lamb, edited as one would expect, by Mr. E. V. Lucas, will be published on April 11th under the combined imprints of the firms of Messrs.

Dent and Methuen. Prior to this collection, produced in celebration of the Lamb centenary, there have been many editions of the Letters. The Boston Bibliophile Society's has hitherto been the most comprehensive, but Mr. Lucas's collection will contain about 200 more—over 1,000 in all.

Brighton, with its clear-cut character and rich past is a fitting subject for the social historian; and for Mr. Osbert Sitwell, one might say, more than another. In collaboration with Miss Margaret Barton he has written the history of that experienced resort. Messrs. Faber and Faber will publish it on the 14th of this month.

Several collections of good short stories may be looked for this spring—indigenous English and modern American. A volume by Mr. T. F. Powys is announced by Messrs. Chatto and Windus.

American talent will be seen in the ten *O. Henry Prize Stories* to be published by Messrs. Heinemann, and in *Story in America*, 1933-4, a collection due from Messrs. Arthur Barker on March 18th. The prize stories of the O. Henry Memorial Award were selected last year by a committee presided over by Mr. Harry Hansen, literary editor of *The New York World-Telegram*. *Story in America* is last year's anthology of the magazine called *Story*, edited by Whit Burnett and Martha Foley, which has made a name for itself by the discovery of new young writers with a new technique. Meanwhile, some of Mr. Burnett's own tales, *The Maker of Signs*, are to be published by Messrs. Cape on the 4th.

Announcements of forthcoming novels include *Good-bye to the Past*, by W. R. Burnett, author of *Iron Man* and *Little Caesar*, to be published by Messrs. Heinemann some time this month, and *Pylon*, by William Faulkner, due from Messrs. Chatto and Windus on the 25th.

THE THEATRE

LOVE ON THE DOLE. By RONALD GOW AND WALTER GREENWOOD. Garrick.

DAYS WITHOUT END. By EUGENE O'NEILL. Stage Society.

SUMMER'S LEASE. By WINIFRED HOWE. Embassy.

ON the sensitive spectator to-day *Love on the Dole* must make the kind of impression that a *Journey's End* would have made if it had been presented in war-time. Its survival value as a piece of drama may not be very high. The interplay of character and motive is not altogether satisfactory. There are moments when the second act seems to belong to some lesser play. Yet the essential truth of its picture of life in the industrial trenches is never in doubt, and the emotional power of that picture is strong enough to overwhelm any feeling we may have that here and there the narrative might have been more skilful.

Mr. Shaw's Drinkwater was a playgoer who looked to drama for something which should take him "aht of the sawdid reeyellities of the Worterloo Rowd." Since there is in each of us something of Drinkwater and one would like every seat in the Garrick Theatre to be filled for many nights to come it may be as well to make it clear that, unflinchingly as the authors have represented the sordid misery of existence in one of the depressed areas, they have thrown in a good deal of humorous relief, perhaps too much, and have done their best to provide romantic contrast. It is here indeed that they have gone astray. The mill girl and her lover apostrophizing the beauty and the freedom of the moors to which they have gained difficult access are speaking and thinking like the characters in one of Miss Dodie Smith's charmingly unreal plays. The street scenes of betting and love-making, though the girl's brother, the hero of them, is always alive, lose the inevitability which marks the dialogue whenever it deals directly with the struggle of the Hardcastle family to live respectably, as they have always lived, in a town from which work is mysteriously and continuously receding.

All that is truest in the play—which might more accurately have been named "The Workless Man"—centres on old Hardcastle. He is a decent, tradition-loving workman who, finding himself on the dole, tightens his belt and believes the newspapers which tell him that trade is turning the corner. His wife takes in washing and makes up parcels for the pawnshop until there are no more household goods left to parcel, a simple woman who makes no complaints and never pretends to understand the causes of her sufferings. In a short while father and son are both living on the dole, and, when the dole is withdrawn, upon the wages Sally gets from one of the mills still working. Through it all old Hardcastle never loses hope of something turning up, never ceases to retain his sense of respectability. When it appears that his son has been making love with the rashness of inexperience and must marry the girl, he is so mortified that he turns the young fool out of the house. From this point onward we are made to feel the utter defencelessness of the family and the swift weakening of their power to recover from the chance blows of life. Chance kills Sally's lover, and the blow is crushing. She decides to market her good looks, and the opulent local book-maker is an eager buyer. The gesture may seem melodramatic, but its effect upon old Hardcastle is genuinely tragic. He threatens to kill the girl who is disgracing her family. She has ceased to care for the family's respectability. She is concerned only to escape the pawnbrokers and the vermin and to supply her family and herself with her seducer's easily earned money. Old Hardcastle is brought to the verge of mental

collapse by the girl's decision. He is like a man dying of thirst. He cries out for work, and in that despairing cry is the play's whole poignancy.

Without the balance and the integrity of Mr. Julien Mitchell's portrait of Hardcastle the play would lose half its power, and his fine performance is beautifully supported by Miss Cathleen Nesbitt's study of the baffled, undistinguished little woman who patiently presides over the Hardcastle household, by Miss Wendy Hiller's vital presentment of the mill girl and by Mr. Grandison's lively sketch of the impetuous son. Some of these actors are new to the London stage; some are not. There is an inevitable mixture of styles, but the result is on the whole fortunate.

The Stage Society has opened its new season adventurously with a production of *Days Without End*, a recent play by Mr. Eugene O'Neill which attempts with courage and originality the theme of a man's salvation by religion. John Loving is divided into two parts. One half of him is idealistic and loyal, the other half sceptical and faithless. Acutely aware of the need for religion he has been led into a denial of God and having found happiness in married love resentment of the tyranny of love impels him to adultery, not for its own sake but for its value as a re-assertion of his independence. His wife, learning of this act of infidelity and divining that John has subconsciously desired her death, finds herself unable to forgive him. She falls ill and is brought to the point of death. At her bedside the conflict between the two sides of the man's nature reaches its climax, and the better side achieves an ascendancy which makes it possible for a miracle to happen. The faculty of forgiveness returns to the wife and John Loving recovers the lost unity of his life at the foot of the Cross, symbol of the larger love. The impression gained by reading this play was that a too easy emotionalism in Mr. O'Neill would rob the concluding movement of the solemn significance it was meant to possess and that what was vague in his movement would in any case be disastrously emphasized by the abounding vitality given the plain story of infidelity. Performance lent confirmation to these fears. The play is complicated from beginning to end, but Mr. Lewis Casson succeeded remarkably well in making the earlier complications not only plain but arresting. He could do little with the climax, and the fault seemed to be less in him than in the dialogue, which was hysterical and over-written. But for the greater part of the performance the conflict between John and his *alter ego* was impressive, and Miss Iris Baker and Miss Diane de Brett made it beautifully clear that Mr. O'Neill had studied the wife and the temptress with all his accustomed psychological acuteness.

Summer's Lease is a first play of promise by Miss Winifred Howe. It is an extremely vivacious essay in the van Druten vein of realism, promise appearing oddly enough less in the story of wasted love than in the deft delineation of the background, which is a stockbroker's office. I do not remember a play in which one waited so long for the story to move from one point to another and chafed so little at the delay. The gossip of typists, the mild flirtations of the junior partner in his wanderings from room to room, the slightly malicious but uncommonly persuasive sketch of the senior partner who manages to get his work done for him and has no mercy on those who do it, and the heroic spirit in which the heroine meets the demands of "overtime" are the staple of an excellent evening's entertainment. The story itself is neither good nor bad. It is merely insufficient. The overworked secretary writes a successful play and is foolish enough to fall in love with the young actor who carries it to success. Elaboration of the background takes up time that should be given to the secretary's relations with the actor. But the background is good fun, and it was skilfully sketched in by a cast which included Miss Dorice Fordred and Mr. Wyndham Goldie, an actor of promise.

A. V. COOKMAN

ART—WILLIAM ROBERTS

THE breakdown since the eighteenth century of all the old traditions and conventions and beliefs has given to modern painting its marvellous variety. It has also made the task of the individual painter more difficult perhaps than it has ever been before. The right to self-expression is a glorious thing to have won, but it is an embarrassing prize for all but the very great. Before he can express himself a man has to find himself to express. It is not an easy task to find oneself deliberately and all alone. Easier far to find oneself accidentally when one is the servant of someone else, of a tradition, of an idea. Of the swarm of modern painters only a few have succeeded in the search. Of these many have found themselves but once, and now are doing a Dufy or a Laurencin over and over again for the rest of their lives.

Discipline from somewhere is essential before any man can make himself effective, and it is far more difficult to impose a self-made discipline from within upon oneself than to accept one ready-made from outside. It is this which gives a heroic quality to the art of William Roberts, whose exhibition of oils and water-colours and drawings at the Lefevre Gallery closes on March 2nd. He stands alone among living painters, with whom he has less in common, both in his conception of form and in the quality of his craftsmanship, than with the sculptor and engraver Eric Gill. Gill works in a technique which, because colour is excluded, is often described as more limited. Yet he is the more elastic of these two. Roberts, whose matter is the usual matter of the sculptor, prefers the two dimensions of the canvas because they can put precise limits to its field. He is the sternest self-disciplinarian of the British school, designing always with the human figure as almost the sole motif, yet subjecting it to a system more deliberate, an execution more scrupulous, than those of any "abstract" painter from "Unit One." In designing he snatches no relief from any irrelevant detail, while his mere technical process would be an ordeal intolerable to most men: before the small oil-painting a little water-colour, also perfect, though sometimes with variations in colour: before the water-colour a pencil drawing of the same size, perfect again, and already identical in design with the finished picture. Neither in the drawing nor in the oil can any sign of the process be detected. The texture of the surface is so perfect that there is none; and so with that of the design. Tone is smoothed into tone, contour rounded into contour, so that there is no beginning and no end.

Yet this precise logic of design includes perspectives and combinations of form such as no other English painter would attempt. One of Roberts' pictures would look most in keeping in a *quattrocento* room of the Uffizi Gallery. Not that he makes any of the direct appeal to our sympathies that is made by the Italian Renaissance painter. He wears a brutally sardonic mask. His creatures have heavy bodies and tiny close-cropped heads, with narrow foreheads and gaping mouths, whether it is *Sam Rabin versus Black Eagle*, where a wrestler is crashing out of the ring, or *The Judgment of Paris*, where Paris exults crudely in his opportunity and the three divinities dance along after him unable to conceal their jealousy from the grinning shepherd. They stamp the earth with heavy, earthy feet, and only from the distant range of yellow hills beyond the blue sound can one catch the faintest twang of the lyre. In most of these designs there is not much more than such a tiny hint of sympathy. But this is a concession for Roberts to have made. The exhibition suggests that he is mellowing a little in spirit. His pictures are undoubtedly gaining in harmony. His colour, his form,

his whole design, are deeper and more tranquil. One has only to compare the two portraits of his wife, *A Woman with Beads* and *A Woman wearing Ear-rings*, to see how in the last year or two he has let his feelings out. Simpler though it is, the latter is far richer in colour and in form. It is tender in a fine, reserved way.

This tenderness of feeling emerges less from the three other portraits than from *The Family*, the simplest and grandest of the compositions. This might pass for a Holy Family of the Renaissance. There is a certain sweet humour even in the fiendishness with which the child rejects the spoon and breaks the round outline of the design with spiky fingers, while the figures of father and mother are concentrated into a single expression of service and solicitude. Surely the projection of these forms from the dark pools of their own shadow upon the pink ground, the continuity of the pattern they make against it, the harmony of their deep, pure colours are the more significant for embodying emotions with which we can sympathize? Surely it is an emotion which has drawn from Roberts the best of his designs?

No intermediate water-colour of this design is exhibited. Perhaps there is one. Or did Roberts go straight from drawing to oil, and so give more life to this picture? The other oils seem to have less life than the water-colours, in which the colour is brighter and the movement of the brush is sometimes visible. The perfectionist is always in danger of defeating his own ends, and there is something a little deadly in this perfection thrice repeated. One would rather see the processes before the finished drawing, get a peep at the initial idea and the improvements made upon it. More than in perfection man rejoices in growth. For growth is alive, and perfection is near to death. It is only the living thing which can cross that very narrow line between the ridiculous and the sublime.

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The Commemorative Catalogue of the Exhibition of British Art (Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 1935, price 50s.) is worthy of a better exhibition than that which was held at Burlington House in 1934. Designed as a companion to the similar catalogues of the Dutch, Italian and French exhibitions, it has the same fine qualities in compilation and in craftsmanship. The 256 half-tone plates are excellent, even for the Oxford University Press, and the text is set up in a clear and dignified way. A catalogue of this kind, broken into short paragraphs and sentences and peppered with names and dates, inscriptions, titles and abbreviations is a difficult but fascinating problem for the typographer. The rather pedantic quality of the Oxford Press craftsmanship is ideal for the purpose.

The clarity achieved in the typography is, however, contradicted by the innovation of entering the exhibits in chronological order. There are already nine sections, made necessary by the diversity of material. When one has discovered the right section, one might expect at least the aid of the alphabet in getting direct to the item. Not so. Unless one has unique genius for chronology one must have recourse to the index of artists, which is not so easily discovered, near the middle of the book. Chronological order has no purpose but to provide a plan of gradual development in consecutive reading. But no sane man would sit down to read this book. The editors, Prof. Constable and Mr. Charles Johnson, have seen to that. It is a prodigious mine of history and bibliography in highly concentrated form.

PHILIP HENDY

MUSIC

SINCE the collapse of Germany as a musical country and the disappearance of Vienna's last few claims to musical priority in Europe, London has become the centre of the musical world. For better and for worse London audiences are more interested to hear the new works of contemporary composers as they appear, more catholic in their tastes, more tolerant and perhaps more enthusiastic than any other audiences in Europe. Since the days when the works of Tschaikovsky made their first appearance over here there has been a special feeling for Russian music in this country. For English taste is neither quite Latin nor quite Teutonic, and the combination of a certain simple sincerity with great exterior brilliance, which Russian music can often boast, appeals to the moral depth and to the artistic superficiality of the English nature. We are embarrassed by the ardour and unashamed dramatic quality of Italian music, which we profess to find too obvious and tuneful. The alternation of abstract idealism and student humour, the colossal seriousness and frequent technical complication of much German music make us uncomfortable and sometimes superciliously bored. French music we find on the whole charming but frivolous. But the Russians have found a home from home in England: and so even a composer like Yuri Shaporin, who announces himself as a musician of the socialist revolution—a Soviet and no longer a Russian composer—can find a greatly enthusiastic audience for an extremely long symphony.

This Symphony in C minor was conducted by Albert Coates in the Queen's Hall on January 23rd. Its four movements are labelled Fact—Dance—Lullaby—Campaign: the audience is warned not to take the titles too seriously. A Russian critic says that the symphony "reveals the transition of a Russian intellectual from individualism and tragic loneliness, caused by the destruction of the past, to the fervour of revolutionary struggle and a deep faith in its victory, which is to bring happiness to humanity." It is scored for a full post-Wagnerian orchestra, a brass band, a chorus and solo piano.

The plan, then, is grandiose: programme and means are on the grandest scale. Failure to live up to these pretensions means a more disastrous failure than could ever be achieved by a more modestly-planned work. And in fact Shaporin's symphony is monumentally boring. The evening had begun with Borodin's Second Symphony and Tschaikovsky's Violin Concerto. Saint Petersburg and Moscow, the Nationalist and the Westernizing schools of Russian music had been thoroughly well represented, when Shaporin, a Ukrainian, appeared to close the evening with an enormous cento of all Russian musical idioms up to the present day—excluding only the later styles of Stravinsky. The orchestration was brilliant—or "barbaric" as the notes to Russian programmes always call it—the percussion was monstrously abused and the writing for the brass often deserted Rimsky-Korsakov for Wagner. Folk-song is liberally used and the choral passages often suggest the tasteless parodies of Russian music which occasionally fill out a spare number in a Cochran revue. The small passage for solo piano—a little reminiscent of Scriabin—was unfortunately played on an upright Chapell piano not perfectly in tune: and this prejudiced its effect. The introduction of the Budenny march at the end gave the work a slight flavour of "Land of Hope and Glory."

The whole symphony is typical of that kind of *modern* music which the public prides itself on appreciating. Harmonically, as emotionally, Shaporin's symphony is

conservative—a little bold here and there, but never striking any really new note. A great deal of noise still impresses a certain part of any audience: and the vague melancholy of any Slav folk-tune will set a fair number of hearts fluttering without fail. And so the ground is too well prepared, the work too easy for Russian composers in England. If we are to have more of them let us learn to be more discriminating.



At the other end of the scale is the *Art of Fugue*, orchestrated by Wolfgang Graeser and conducted on January 28th in the Queen's Hall by Hans Weisbach. After Yuri Shaporin, John Sebastian Bach. Here are nineteen fugues, 2,032 bars of them, which Dr. Tovey has explained as a "kind of appendix to the *Well Tempered Clavier*—keyboard music first and last. Instead of exploiting the keys, with various fugal subjects, as in his earlier work, he planned to use one principal subject for his demonstration, and to expound it in a single key (D minor) on the keyboard. In fact, excepting the two mirror fugues the whole of it lies within the stretch of two hands on the keyboard, a restriction to which Bach would hardly have submitted if another interpretive medium had been in his mind." Here Bach is a scholar writing for the scholarly. And, as Pater writes of the austere pleasures of good prose, so here, too, "to really strenuous minds there is a pleasurable stimulus in the challenge for a continuous effort on their part, to be rewarded by securer and more intimate grasp of the author's sense. Self-restraint, a skilful economy of means, *asceticism*, that, too, has a beauty of its own: and for the reader supposed there will be an æsthetic satisfaction in that frugal closeness of style which makes the most of a word, in the exaction from every sentence of a precise relief, in the just spacing out of every word to thought, in the logically filled space connected always with the delightful sense of difficulty overcome."

The real interest of the *Art of Fugue* is hidden from anyone who has never tried to write fugues, just as Pater's own English is lost on any man who has never tried to express his thoughts and feelings in ordered and well-adjusted language. There is, of course, an inevitable monotony in the work, which not even the orchestration can quite relieve: and perhaps Pater's "delightful sense of difficulty overcome" is lost to the ordinary listener, who can do little more than trace a vague resemblance between the themes of the nineteen fugues, but remains perfectly ignorant of the amazing virtuosity of the whole composition. At most he may be aware of a feeling that every fragment is working to a divinely-appointed end; and this is an awareness of perfection of form—perfect balance of idea, substance and means, as Mr. Newman has said.

If he has this sensation he can ask for no more. For everything worth saying about music—as Mr. Calvocoressi has pointed out in a recent article in *Musical Opinion*, February, 1935—originates in a judgment (or reaction) of some sort. The technical interest of the *Art of Fugue* is perhaps really very little more than one of those *indirect data* whose importance in musical criticism is so disputed between Mr. Newman and Mr. Calvocoressi. The *Art of Fugue* must be judged as a work of art, by the same standards as a Chopin Nocturne or the *Sacre*: and these standards are the simple and universal standards of musical beauty, so far as they can be defined at all. The glory of the *Art of Fugue* lies in the fact that it can fill the Queen's Hall with an excited audience of music-loving amateurs and be at the same time the classic text-book of a highly technical and abstruse branch of musical theory. As though one might read a *Gradus ad Parnassum* with the same pleasure as the *Æneid*!

MARTIN COOPER

FILMS

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. American.

THE LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER. American.

CHAPAYEV. Russian.

THE DICTATOR. British.

THERE is no fool-proof recipe for making popular films, but a few films have popularity written all over them. You can feel in them a curious, magnetic quality which will certainly draw large audiences. Both the first two films on my list this month have this quality—and otherwise nothing in common. *Strictly Confidential* is a comedy-drama, with a mild love interest, about American racing. *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, devoid of love interest, is a tale of military adventure on the North-West Frontier of India. What is it in these two pictures that will ensure their success?

Every popular film, I believe, has one pre-eminent virtue—vitality. It means, perhaps, that a certain enthusiasm, a certain faith, has gone into the work of production. A bored director will mechanically photograph dull sequences without noticing their dullness, for he is bored anyway, and uncritical. An enthusiastic director, in love with his picture, may easily be uncritical of many of its less obvious defects, but he will demand that a film which in imagination seems to him so entertaining shall at least move with vigour and assurance across the screen.

A film may have vitality and yet be crude and vulgar. But vitality, I think, is a necessary basis for most virtues—even the rarer artistic virtues. And for popularity one might add two further qualities—narrative interest and characters in whom the members of an average audience can see expressed their own ambitions and desires.

Strictly Confidential, directed for Columbia by Frank Capra, would have had less of this last type of appeal if it had appeared before the slump, for its story challenges most of the ideals of big business. It is about the son-in-law of a domineering millionaire who leaves his wife and the family business to go racing. If his horse fails to win the big race he will have to return humiliated, and his efforts to raise money for expenses provide the film with most of its continuous flow of varied and lively incident. Capra enters with so much zest into every moment that he sometimes forgets to tie his loose ends neatly together, but he has an unfailing eye for amusing detail, and there is a clever treatment of the effect of rumour on racecourse psychology. Warner Baxter is a trifle too boisterous as the hero, but Myrna Loy is very good as the girl who helps him, and the minor types and characters are an example of that expert casting which is always one of Hollywood's strongest resources. The same kind of story has been used in a hundred racing melodramas; one difference here is that Capra is interested first in human beings, not first in horses.

The Lives of a Bengal Lancer has taken nothing from Major Yeats-Brown's book except the military setting of the early chapters. The chief characters are the Colonel of the 41st Bengal Lancers (Sir Guy Standing), a devoted martinet who lives for the regiment; his son (Richard Cromwell), a subaltern fresh from Sandhurst; and two contrasted Lieutenants—a quick-tempered Scotch-Canadian (Gary Cooper), and a cool, assured young Englishman (Franchot Tone), from the Blues. Trouble starts when the Colonel's son is kidnapped by an Afridi chieftain—who is planning to seize an ammunition convoy—and the other two young officers, defying the Colonel's

order, set off disguised in the hope of rescuing him from the chieftain's stronghold. They are captured and tortured, the regiment arrives to attack the stronghold, and there is a terrific struggle full of graphic episodes finely photographed.

It is strange that this picture, full of fervent British patriotism, should have been made by an American company, with scenes taken partly in India and partly in California, but Hollywood has carried it all off with astonishing assurance. If there were space to go into psychological implications, one would have to complain that military values and the virtues of the British Raj are given a rather dangerously uncritical advertisement; but as a dramatic entertainment the film is a brilliant piece of work. The acting—particularly Sir Guy Standing's rendering of the inarticulate Colonel—is thoroughly reliable; and the production is specially notable for its success in uniting a credible military background with a lurid story of hairbreadth adventure.

Chapayev, shown by the Film Society last month, is a new kind of Russian picture. Moscow here takes a holiday both from revolutionary propaganda and from the difficult task of dramatizing the rivalries of shock brigades in tractor factories. *Chapayev* might almost be a Hollywood "Western" in a new setting—Turkestan during the civil war of 1919. The hero is a carpenter turned guerilla leader, the heroine is a woman machine-gunner; the climax is a grand attack by the Whites on a farmhouse where Chapayev and his lieutenant keep a whole battalion at bay while the heroine gallops off in search of help. The technique, too, is perfectly straightforward, owing nothing to the famous *montage* theories of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, but it is good technique, terse and clear, and the character-drawing has a realistic warmth of humour seldom found in American melodramas. The Soviet Commissar sent to help the impulsive Chapayev treats him with kindly insight; the peasant and the official are soon on the best of terms. Is *Chapayev* a friendly gesture from the Kremlin to the man-on-the-farm?

These three films are all vigorously alive. *The Dictator* is like a huge statue; its vitality has turned to stone. Or, rather, to a blend of costly substances—silk dresses, brocaded coats, ornamental candlesticks, marble stairways, tessellated pavements. The scene is the Court of Denmark in the year 1766; the story—based on historical events—is about an ambitious German doctor, Struensee, who dominates the dissolute young King and starts to put through a programme of democratic reform. All goes well for a time—until Struensee gives his enemies their opportunity by falling in love with the newly-married Queen, a sister of George III of England. There are moments of drama in the early sequences, but the characters are overpowered by their luxurious surroundings, and the conflict between democracy and privilege peters out rather tamely. Clive Brook is quietly efficient as Struensee; Madeleine Carroll is graceful and sympathetic as the young Queen, but the best acting comes from Helen Haye as the Queen Mother. A great deal of careful work has gone into this production; it lies handsomely in state on the screen, heaped round with rococo flowers.

MARTIN HERNE

BOOK-PRODUCTION NOTES

AN ANTHOLOGY FROM THE GREEK*—THE LUTETIA TYPE.

QUOTING a saying of Dryden's that "translation is a kind of drawing after the life," Mr. Hamilton claims that the translation of Greek poetry may pass "beyond the interpretation of this or that poem . . . [and] limn, however imperfectly, the spiritual features of that marvellous race." If so, such a collection as this, gathered from the writings of the greatest of the Greek poets from Homer to Meleager, must go far towards furnishing a complete "portrait" of that people whose "life was in their poetry." The translations, followed in each case by the Greek text, are picked from a wide field, wherein are gathered Turberville, Chapman and Herrick of the ancients, Pope to represent the Augustans, Shelley the Romantics, Gilbert Murray, Humbert Wolfe and Mr. Hamilton himself, with many more, the moderns.

In its production one Nonesuch book never repeats another. We might search the history of printing in vain for another printer so versatile as Mr. Meynell. Employing a number of eminent printers within these shores and without to print his books, he is able to endow them in their character and layout with a variety which may well be the envy and the despair of anyone whose output is confined to the resources of a single office. And their charm comes less from that variety than from the study and skill and good taste which have gone to their making. *The Greek Portrait* was printed at Enschedé's famous press at Haarlem, with the collaboration of Mr. J. van Krimpen; and the English text is printed in the Lutetia type which he designed. With the exception of the Centaur type designed by Mr. Bruce Rogers, the Lutetia is perhaps the best of all those recent faces which owe their inspiration to the work of the early printers.** *The Greek Portrait* is set in the 16-point size, which gives a cool and eminently readable page. The Greek text of each poem is printed immediately after the English version in the Fleischman Greek type, a descendant, much simplified, of the cursive Aldine Greek which has ruled down to our own day.

MR. ERIC GILL'S SOLUS TYPE.

MY reader may like to compare Mr. van Krimpen's Lutetia (with its debt to the early printers), with the Solus, designed by that accomplished artist in lettering, Mr. Eric Gill. I am therefore asking the Monotype Corporation, for whom Mr. Gill designed the type, to set this Note in the 12-point size of that letter. It is

* *The Greek Portrait*. An Anthology of English Verse Translations from the Greek Poets (Homer to Meleager) with the corresponding Greek Text. Large 8vo., 425 copies on Pannekoek paper. Two guineas.

** To show the character of Lutetia, the Monotype Corporation has kindly set the above Note in the 12-point Didot size of that face.

now available as a book-type in 14-point and 11-point also, and as a "display" face in 18-point and 48-point. It will be seen, I think, that the type gains in clearness from its heavy weight as compared with the roman types of the same size of body which are in general use. Moreover, the descenders have not been unduly shortened, so that the type can be set solid without any appearance of over-crowding. It is dangerous to forecast the success of any new type-face until it has stood the test of use; and I have not yet seen any book set in the new face. But the Solus seems to have the clearness as well as the beauty which we look for in a good type for printing books, and its design shows no trace of that disregard for traditional forms which has prejudiced many recent adventures in type-design.

AN OXFORD "HERRICK" *

IN printing the works of any great poet it is not always easy to reconcile the claims of the mere lover of his poetry with those of the textual scholar. The student of the text wants in front of him for comparison the variant readings of the manuscript or printed sources. But to one who would read Donne, or Crashaw, or Herrick just for the poetry, it is distressing to find the foot of each page disfigured with the algebra-like formulæ of a conscientious editor's apparatus criticus. Here is the happy solution by which the Oxford Press provides for the lawful occasions of both kinds of student: let scholarship, represented in this instance by F. W. Moorman's edition of Herrick, which was issued from the Clarendon Press in 19—, establish the best text; and then let Mr. Bruce Rogers take that same text and give it to us in handy size and comely guise, freed from the scholar's trammels, as he has done here. Then we may put the "Hesperides" in the pocket and read them lying lazily by the Isis, or seated by one of those rocky Devon streams which are dear to us but which Herrick himself so little loved. The volumes are set in the nine-point size of Baskerville, which for all its clearness I find a little small for entire comfort; and the indexes are smaller still—in nonpareil. But it is good to have the whole of Herrick in the best text so well printed in two handy volumes.

THE REED PALE PRESS

MR. EDMUND D. BROOKS, of "The Reed Pale Press"—its device is a shield charged with a red pale—is the son of a well-known book-collector of Philadelphia. Sharing his father's love for fine books, he became a pupil to Mr. Alexander Moring at the De La More Press, and in 1928 set up his own little private press in London. There he set the type for this *Book of Ruth*† in 1930; but falling ill, he had to return to America. He is now convalescing at Honolulu. The printing of his book, therefore, has been carried out at the De La More Press. It is set in an Old English black letter, great primer in size. That is a favourite type of mine; and its blackness and large size make it much easier to read than many a small thin-faced roman. But to give it its full beauty it should be set close-spaced, as was done by Wynkyn de Worde and Pynson, following in that the old handwriting from which it derives.

B. H. NEWDIGATE.

* *The Poems of Robert Herrick*. In two volumes. The Hesperides Series. Small 8vo. Milford. 500 copies. 15s. net.

† *The Book of Ruth*. 4to. 250 copies, of which ten are in vellum. Quarter forril, 15s. Sawyer, Grafton Street, W.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES & NEWS

GENERAL NOTES

THE first number of *Bibliographical Notes and Queries* (Elkin Mathews, 78, Grosvenor Street, London, W.1 ; annual subscription, half-a-guinea) is now out. It is a pamphlet of twelve pages, and contains, besides a preliminary editorial announcement of policy, thirty-seven contributions, chiefly queries, but in some instances notes, from various correspondents. To some of these the editor has evidently been to considerable trouble in endeavouring to find answers. It is pleasing to see that among those who are making use of this new medium for the exchange of information, even in its first number, are such well-known collectors or bibliographers as Lord Esher, Mr. A. Edward Newton, Mr. Carroll A. Wilson, Mr. T. Balston, Mr. Stephen Gaselee, and Mr. H. V. Marrot. One query refers to an *incunabulum*, another concerns a seventeenth-century book, and there are several contributions relating to the eighteenth century, amongst others an interesting and detailed note on variations in the first edition of Burke's *French Revolution*, 1790.

Most of the paper, however, relates to nineteenth- and twentieth-century publications. Two of Lord Esher's queries have to do with comparatively common first editions by Tennyson, *Maud* and *Enoch Arden*, both of which present problems to which some attention was paid in these pages a few years ago. One of the most interesting questions asked is also one of the shortest: "What is the date of the earliest printed dust-wrapper?" That is the sort of point which such a journal as *Bibliographical Notes and Queries* is especially fitted to solve—and these matters of publishing custom and style are extraordinarily hard to establish with certainty. The earliest printed dust-wrapper I, personally, happen to have seen was dated 1847, but there may quite well have been earlier ones. For the present this new magazine is a quarterly, but if (as the publishers hope) it meets with enough support to enable them to issue it monthly, the utility of the paper will, clearly, be very much increased. Bibliography, it is true, is a science in the practice of which the highest virtue is patience—but one does not always wish to wait three months for an answer if it is possible to get it sooner. All serious book-collectors and bibliographers will wish success to *Bibliographical Notes and Queries*, which may well develop into an extremely valuable aid to knowledge. But it can only do so if it meets with the fullest support from all those who stand to benefit by its existence.

SO much for a new tool for bibliophiles—but one must not forget an old one, *Book-Auction Records*, of which the concluding part of Volume 31 reaches me from Messrs. Henry Stevens, Son and Stiles (annual subscription, £1 10s.). The volume as a whole contains over twelve thousand records of books sold during the season which ended last August. I cannot help noticing once again, in these records, how far Mr. Shaw's first editions have fallen from their once high estate. In the present part of *B.A.R.* are three Shaw items: *Cashel Byron's Profession*, 1886, £15; *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*, 1898, with a note from the author inserted, £4; and *Widower's Houses*, 1893, £3 15s. So far as one can tell from the descriptions these were all good copies. As a matter of interest I have just looked up an article I wrote in the spring of 1929 upon the prices Mr. Shaw's first editions were then fetching. One sale is mentioned as containing all three of the books just referred to—but *Cashel Byron* then

fetched £70, *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* £42, and *Widower's Houses* (with a card from the author) £60. Even those prices were not, in each case, the record. As for Mr. H. G. Wells, who at one time occupied a page or more in each part of *B.A.R.*, he now has only four entries in the course of the whole volume. By contrast more than forty of George Moore's works figure in this year's index, most of them more than once—he has, indeed, rather more entries than John Milton.

ITEMS FROM THE BOOKSHOPS AND CATALOGUES

FIRST catalogues have always been regarded as having a specially strong claim to attention in these notes. It is therefore with pleasure that I record the arrival of such a list from The Brompton Bookshop, 22, Beauchamp Place, Brompton Road, London, S.W.3. The partners in this firm are Messrs. J. S. Cornwall and I. Norvell, who were both for many years with Messrs. Dobell. The catalogue opens with a section devoted to early works on chemistry, alchemy and medicine, in which more than a hundred items are offered. Then follow some three hundred miscellaneous books, chiefly at very low prices. Amongst these I notice the first edition of J. M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, 1907, for no more than half-a-guinea, which does not seem much to pay for the original edition of one of the most famous of modern plays. Three Bernard Shaw first editions are also here: *The Perfect Wagnerite*, 1898, £1 10s.; *Man and Superman*, 1903, £1 5s.; and *The Irrational Knot*, 1905, a guinea. These prices are, of course, much lower than those which were being asked five or six years ago for these books, which seem distinctly attractive at such a more reasonable level of value. There are also many older books in this list.

THE George Gregory Bookstore, 8, Green Street, Bath, has just issued its catalogue 329. As this firm has for many years made a speciality of sets of *Punch*, I naturally turned first to the letter P. There I discovered that "a complete set of this unrivalled periodical," from its beginning in July, 1841, to the end of 1933, in cloth with all the Almanacks and extra numbers bound in, costs only £30. This I put very high in the "if" class of books—which means the books I would buy at once if I had both the money and the space to put them in. I can never understand how any owner of a really big house allows himself to go on existing without a complete run of *Punch* on his shelves—a thing I have always longed to possess.

IN catalogue 204, from Mr. G. H. Last, of 21A, High Street, Bromley, Kent, are several pages devoted to autograph letters and manuscripts. One lot, which sounds as if it had interesting possibilities, is described as "a large parcel of letters" addressed chiefly to R. B. Sheridan and his son Tom, between the years 1776 and 1826. £6 10s. is asked for the lot, which includes letters from Thomas Moore, Samuel Rogers, and other well-known people. Among other items in this list are autograph letters from "Lewis Carroll," Charles Kingsley, George Meredith, Thomas Love Peacock, Mrs. Piozzi and Queen Anne.

ANOTHER catalogue in which autograph letters figure largely is number 1013 from Messrs. Tregaskis, of 66, Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. The most notable of them is the letter (well-known from its having been printed by Birkbeck Hill) written to Lucy Porter by Dr. Johnson, on February 6th, 1759, shortly after his mother's death, and giving details of what is to be done with her property. It is a striking example of Johnson's tenderness and thoughtfulness for others. Messrs. Tregaskis are asking £220 for this letter.

I. A. WILLIAMS